THE BUILDER'S CROWN OF JEWELS

BY

EVELYN WHITELL

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Metaphysical novel

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By
EVELYN WHITELL

Author of
Extraordinary Mary; A California Poppy;
The Christmas Guest; The Woman Healer; The Silence;
The Healing of the Hawaiian.

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By Evelyn Whitell

Dedicated to

KATHRINE BALDWIN

A bright light whose all-embracing love for humanity

makes her the universal Mother.

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The Builder's Crown of Jewels

CHAPTER I.

BENGAL STOOD in his doorway, studying with far seeing eyes, the well marked map of heaven. A full and perfect moon untouched by clouds as a free soul is untouched by life's obstacles, had lifted the darkness of midnight by the beauty of her shining aura. The hour was too late for birds to sing, yet away in the distant wood, through colors, scents and flowers, their voices came in notes triumphant, as if all were forgotten but the great joys of life. Bengal knew the reason of this sudden outpouring of soul. Mysteries a narrow sighted race could not explain, were open books to him. All nature had met in tune at this great hour. Through the stillness and holy calm, every planet breathed in harmony, and beings of earth and heaven joined as one.

A woman crept suddenly to his side, and stood watching with him. She was old and colored, with a back that had met the bend of years. Rough, crude architecture and hands that had labored in the service of others. To Bengal all these exterior things were things invisible. The deeds of love wrought by those well worn hands, had washed them white, as hands of angels ministering to a needy world. His soul's eye saw the hidden wings beneath the old bent back. Wings that were ready to lift her on their strength, beyond the service she had nobly done.

There had always been a perfect understanding between these two, though they met seldom and corresponded more by thought than by word.

Bengal's nationality, like his character, was a mystery to everyone, and he took no trouble to disclose it. The mixed tribe showed in the color of his skin. His light, wavy hair contradicted the darkness of his deep set shining eyes and heavy hanging brows. The calm strength and poise of his tall and striking figure made even the unobservant turn to look again, bewildered by an atmosphere they could not understand.

About the sealed book of his life, he was silent. "Those who belong to me will know me," he declared, when he built his beautiful temple, amidst mountains and pine woods, where sunsets and valleys of flowers, unhampered by buildings, or smudged by smoke, could blaze forth their glory, in unbroken torrents of color.

Lonely and misunderstood by the world, he held no thoughts of resentment. This life to him was but one drop in a mighty bucket, and his great understanding of the universal law made him work it out like a conscientious student will work out a lengthy sum, never asking for the answer in the book.

It was children alone he attracted. The souls of children looking through unworldly eyes saw something beautiful in this odd unusual man. Something which brought the colors to their little world, and gave reality to the mystic realms where fairies dwelt. Those realms which other people broke to bits by the hard knocker of materialism. It was the soul of a child he sought. It was for the coming of one of these souls to the earth plane, that he studied the heavens tonight.

He turned his eyes from the depths to the surface and spoke to the one who watched with him.

"Sing your song in tune with nature, Mammy," he

said. "Rejoice and give thanks that you are one of the golden links in the chain of light, which draws the soul to our plane. Pray that this soul may retain the memory that grows dim amidst the turmoil and confusion of a clanging, rushing world. Pray that in answer to the anguished cry of planes in darkness, this soul bearing the form of woman may hold the body long enought to give the message."

"A woman's soul," she answered gently, "a baby's soul, what will it meet down here!"

Her eyes grew tragic with the consciousness of suffering. Visions arose of women she had seen oppressed and beaten, held in hard bondage, when they had the wings to soar. The sting of a bitter past was in her brain. Sore smarting memories of a youth of which she never knew the beauty. Though old and of the colored race, she had missed the slavery of her fathers, but had met it in another way. Had met it always through the hand of man. Freedom for everyone had been her prayer, and in that cry for freedom, she had wished that every child of hers should be a male, and so escape the persecution of her sex. She had no reason to rejoice tonight because this prophet told her that in the house she had just left, the expected child would bear a woman's form.

Bengal was quick to recognize the reason of her thought. His smile was full of understanding, as he answered:

"Don't place a smudge of sorrow on the things for which I have worked. This soul, whose star we are now watching, comes to redeem life from destruction, but not to die upon the cross. She comes in the great white light of knowledge, all colors gathered into one. She comes with woman's love for woman. She comes with oil of gold to light a dying lamp. Born with the

consciousness of wings, she will not know the bondage of the earth plane. A woman clothed with the sun, she carries the message of redemption on her lips.

Black Mammy glanced back at the house she had just left where the young mother, resenting her coming motherhood, was lying. She could not see why a soul such as he described, should find abode in those surroundings.

"The richest jewels shine in darkest mines," Bengal responded to her thought. "The sweetest song birds build their nests where we least expect to find them. The soul knows its own home. The Saviors did not choose the softest beds of roses, but where they stepped, the roses grew. "Go home—" he added suddenly, as if some unseen force had broken through his words. "The hands which are to rock the cradle of life for the child, must be the first to hold it."

Black Mammy left him, and he remained in silence, watching the beauty of the heavens. Joy was vibrating there. Joy, such as the wise men must have felt when spiritually their eyes were opened and they saw the star.

A soft wind stirred the leaves and flowers from sleep. Their perfume blew towards him with a sweetness, delicate as blossom, falling on the soft warm air of Spring. It seemed as if, for one brief moment, a world unseen blazed into sight through the amazing distance, blotting by its brilliance the light of every shining sun. A moment only could he bear the vision. Like one stepping from a darkened room into a blaze of sunlight, he placed his hands over his eyes. He was conscious of a woman's face, divine and beautiful, gazing down on the earth with sweet eternal love. It was there and it was gone, but on the rays of light

descending, falling like a meteor through the air, he saw a shining substance, white and perfect as a spotless lily. He saw it waver doubtingly a moment, as it neared the earth plane. Then, as if drawn by earthly forces, or pushed by unseen hands in the invisible, it hastened nearer, passing through rocks to gather strength, through waves to vibrate energy, through the heart of flowers for sweetness and perfume. Blown on the winds, singing through the ether, he saw it pass him in a ball of fire. He folded his hands and closed his eyes in blessing.

"The soul has come," he said, "dynamic in its power. O, woman builder, what have you done, to make the architecture strong enough to bear it?"

CHAPTER II.

BLACK MAMMY took the unloved little baby to her heart, like she had taken many a one before.

The young mother's first request had not been for her child, but for the mirror. She held it in her hand for a moment, then turned away with a sense of disgust.

"I wonder if I shall ever look the same again," she said.

Black Mammy did not answer. She was pouring the warm milk into the bottle for the baby. She remembered as she did so, how her own little ones had lain at her breast, drawing in with the life-food the magnetism and power of a mother's love.

She remembered too, how the big innocent eyes had always been upturned to hers, and how she had often questioned in her humble way, as she looked into those world-unclouded eyes, whether there were any sacrament so sacred as the one taken at the holy altar of the mother's breast.

There was a sound of footsteps up the garden walk; the opening of the front door, and the barking of a dog.

Mrs. Carlton raised her head.

"That is my husband," she said quickly, "call him up stairs."

Marcus Carlton had been away for the week-end. He was tired of travel, and wished for rest more than food. He answered Mammy's request with impatience.

"Tell her I'll be up directly," he said, "I suppose the child is born by now."

"Yes sir," answered Mammy, "and it's a girl."

"What matter," he murmured, more to himself than to her.

He entered the room with an effort, and drew aside the curtains from the snow white bed.

"Feel better now?" he asked, as he smoothed the long dark hair from her pretty, selfish face.

"Much you care how I feel," she said. "This is the first and last time, Marcus."

"I'm willing," he casually replied. "We never wanted children anyway."

His ready assent nettled her temper. Always jealous and suspicious, her first thought went to another woman.

"I have made arrangements for our trip to Europe," he said abruptly as if he did not want to continue the other conversation.

"My Mother will look after the house while we are away, and there is no reason why we should not have a thoroughly enjoyable time."

The prospect of what she had always longed for brought a flush of excitement to her cheeks, and like a cat which purrs and rubs itself against you when you serve its milk, she suddenly threw her arms around his waist.

"You have made arrangements for that, Marcus," she cried. "You dear, kind boy, why did you not tell me before? When do you want us to start? At the end of next month?"

"If you can be ready by that time," he replied.

Then suddenly their conversation stopped, as if it had been snapped in two. They were aroused by the cry of a child.

"I had forgotten the baby," he said.

"The child need make no difference," answered Mrs. Carlton. "You are surely not going to put that stumblingblock in our way. It would be as bad as the old maid, who gave up her vacation because her pet cat was not well."

"My Mother may think it makes a difference," said Mr. Carlton. "No woman of her age cares to be bothered with a child."

"No child is any bother till it learns to talk," replied his wife. "We have a splendid nurse in Mammy, and besides she is too well paid to quarrel with her money. All your Mother need do is to keep watch over the expenses."

Marcus Carlton turned away. The entrance of the angel of life into his home brought nothing but a sense of annoyance, the inconvenience of a father's responsibility which he was only too anxious to shirk.

He was walking from the bedroom frowning and perplexed, when he heard Black Mammy call.

"Come here, I want to show you something beautiful!" she said. He followed, and stood by the little cot with the peculiar sense of embarrassment that most men feel in the presence of a baby.

"All babies look alike, don't they?" he asked.

"This one does not," Mammy replied, as she pulled the covers from the little face.

The child opened its eyes and looked at them; she did not cry like any other baby, and for a moment he stood as if hypnotized by those great appealing eyes.

"You're a lucky man," said Mammy, as she covered the child up again.

"Lucky!" he laughed. "That is what every one tells me. I suppose you heard me speak of our trip to

Europe?" he continued. "My wife thinks herself a lucky woman to-day."

"Women take up glass stones and believe them to be jewels," said Mammy. "They dive in the ocean for sea shells, and leave the pearls to the waves."

"Of course you would find the jewel in the child," laughed Carlton. "That's colored folks! They live to bring forth; they are like hens, never so happy as when they have a brood of chickens around them. To grow up and get married seems their greatest aim. To make a nest for the birds, to toil and work to feed the many open mouths, until broken by the strain, they pass into their graves.

"Generation has not such a charm for me: my life has never made me wish to see myself reflected in another. Small thanks have the majority to give their parents for putting them down here."

"Some day you may be glad you brought this child into the world," said Mammy.

Carlton laughed indolently.

"Especially if she gives me the reflection of myself!" he answered.

"She is going to be a wonder on the earth," continued Mammy, "the good stars meeting in her horoscope."

Mr. Carlton interrupted with upraised hands.

"Don't talk that insanity of Bengal's!" he said, "you colored people have that nigger Hindu on the brain. The very sight of him in that long purple robe just makes me shudder. What have the stars to do with fortune? What superstitious folks you darkies are!"

Mammy looked at him attentively. There was something almost gruesome in the weird light of her

half closed eyes, and she spoke with the emphasis of a prophet.

"Some souls," she said, "are born to see, others to hear. You are one of the unawakened souls. Pray God that your awakening comes before you pass beyond."

She turned away, and left him with these words.

Mr. Carlton stood for a moment, silent, as if her very power held him in contemplation by the cradle of his child.

Then impatiently he went down stairs, his trip forgotten. There was a disturbed mental sensation for which he could not account, hanging round him like a cloud.

CHAPTER III.

BENGAL'S HOUSE had been called by the public the White Temple. It was oddly built of marble, with seven steps of surpassing whiteness, leading to the heavy doors. There was something wonderful about those steps, seeing that they were daily trodden by the feet of those who sought the Master, yet not a speck of soil or dust changed their peculiar shining light. Rain and heavy storms tore through the valley in the summer time, uprooting all things growing, leaving the mark of wreckage everywhere. Tornadoes, like long bound spirits, breaking for a moment from their bondage, rushed headlong down the mountains, carrying all before them, in their mad pursuit for freedom. But Bengal's Temple, ever wrapped in golden light, shone like a jewelled island, washed by many waves, and yet untouched in splendor.

The architecture of the building pleased the eye of artists; the wonder of the boat shaped roof of colored glass; the twisted columns, where birds with unusual wings and colors, came from near and far, to make their homes in the hidden crevices.

But strangest of all was the ascent to the upper-room, which could be entered only by seven high and narrow steps, built firmly into the marble of the wall.

"He might have chosen an easier way, by which we could reach his healing room," the disappointed cripples would say, when they turned back at the sight of the ascent.

"It looks straight enough," said one, "but it is the closed doors, that appear out of nothingness to meet you when you least expect them."

"I tried it once," said another, "but I was glad to get on the ground again. I'd just taken three of the steps, when they began to slip beneath my feet, like sand or water. I'd never venture it again, though I am curious like many others to see what's in that upper room."

There was one, however, who didn't seem to know the meaning of the steps, about which they talked. This was the little girl called Mianda, Marcus Carlton's child, left seven years ago, while he and his wife went on their European trip. She was the added power to Bengal's strength, the light from other worlds, which lifted all his patients to the healing sun.

"Why do you call them steps?" she asked the doubting, fearing people, as they shook their heads at the ascent. "Lift your arms, as I am doing, and let them carry you. There won't be any door until you reach the top."

She raised her arms above her head while she was speaking, then breathing deeply, lowered them half way, palms upwards.

Whether the steps vanished, or it was her rapid ascent that confused their vision, the watchers could not tell, but in a second, she had glided as swiftly through the air as a bird on wings, or a clever swimmer through the water. Some said her feet had never left the earth, others that the steps melted, while she breathed. Some would have questioned angrily what conjurer's trick she played upon them. What Hindu fakery had Bengal taught her to deceive their eyes; but in a moment she was by their side again, a sweet

and natural little child. Her merry laugh of love and victory, ringing through the air.

"You can do just the same," she lovingly assured them, and she spoke of it as an acrobat might speak of some wonderful somersault of which he thought nothing, but by which he had surprised the onlookers.

Marcus Carlton's mother had taken little interest in Mianda since she was left in their care seven years ago. The disappointment in her own life had made her nature cold and bitter. After years of hard struggle, she was glad, however, that her son had provided her with a home for her old age, and her only hope (which heaven mercifully granted), was that they might not return to that home, so long as she was living.

As her grandmother never seemed to understand nor to want her, Mianda grew up between her colored nurse and Bengal, like a wayside flower.

The greatest days in her life were the days in the woods with Bengal. When the green pines sheltered from the heat of the sun, and the cones lay in thousands on the fallen needles, she would go with him to search for herbs. Her quick insight, her keen psychic power drew her, by some force invisible, to the spot where the healing blossoms lay.

Together they would gather them in silence, breathing over each, unuttered prayer.

And when the dusk had fallen in grey vapors over the land, and the fireflies like mischievous, exasperating elves, flashed forth their lights, then died into darkness; when the dewdrops lay in the chalice of the flowers, and out of the wood came the note of the crickets, the whistle of the gophers, and the dismal cry of the owl, they would sit down together on the

stump of some old tree, and rest in the communion of understanding silence.

Mianda loved the long, bright Summer days, but when the Autumn came and the woods were a flame of radiant color, and dropping leaves; when the shumach blazed red, and the maples were gold, her heart would throb with a different exultation.

"Oh, Bengal," she said one day, when she held between her palms a fallen leaf, which nature had kissed into a score of colors, "Oh, Bengal, if I could only make things like that."

Bengal looked at her curiously a moment. He never passed her sentences unnoticed.

"What do you mean, my child?" he said.

Mianda looked around and then up at the trees, as if her soul were crying for expression.

"I mean," she said—"Oh, Bengal, I can't tell you yet." He laid his hand upon her head.

"Wait till it comes to you my child," he answered. "Don't stumble over words, and give your thoughts out unexpressed."

Mianda looked upwards again. The sun was setting, and the golden glow added to the blaze of color in the wood. The pines were waving in the wind; the flax of the seeding milkweed was scattered on the grass like snow.

"I mean, Bengal," she said, and her little hand clutched tightly. "I mean, when I see all this; the red-green ivy climbing up the trees, and the big blue sky and the big blue river, where the leaves are swimming, and where the boughs of the trees bend down to drink, and the cows wade, and the butterflies sip, I mean when I see the soil all brown like it looks when the rain has wet it, and the sun has not had time to scorch it dry,—oh, I don't know! I mean I want to make a

picture like it. They told me I could do it if I got a paint box, and Mammy brought me one from town, but it has not the colors I find here. I want to dip my brush right in that shumach, I want to get the green out of the pines. I made poor Mammy sad, because I threw the box away, and dipped my brush in mud and rain instead. I could not paint the grass and trees with those old colors, they only told me wicked lies."

"And you would not be satisfied with lies," said Bengal, "you will not, like most of us, take the false and make believe it's pretty; you want the real and not the imitation."

They walked along in silence for some time. The grass in the fields had grown thicker, Mianda's little figure was almost hidden as she walked between it.

By and by the light faded, and the first star came out; darkness was quickly descending, and Bengal lifted the child into his arms. "How many years upon this plane, Mianda?" he asked suddenly. "I will not say how old are you, for you are old, so old, nearly as old a soul as Bengal."

Mianda laughed a little as she answered. "But Mammy says old souls have no business here, it shows they did not do their work before, or they would not need to have come back again."

Bengal sighed deeply as he answered: "That is the sacrifice, my child. Not the cross, but the return. Some of us come to show the way; to teach these poor misguided souls the knowledge we have gathered on our journey. Others are drawn back, when love of an ideal is worship; they choose to follow it through flames of fire. The ideal may be a nothingness to some, but if to them it is ideal, the quest, the sacrifice is God-like."

"You, little girl, belong to other climes, where there are softer winds and softer voices, and yet you choose to come back here, drawn by the karma of an affirmation."

The child was only partly following; her head had fallen on his shoulder; she was listening between her dreams.

"Seven years," he said, as if he had been figuring mentally. "The first seven years down here, and you have spent them near to Bengal. The groundwork is complete; the foundation of the Temple laid, but it rests with you to do the building."

"What are you talking about Bengal?" asked the child, arousing with the consciousness that they were nearing home.

He placed her on her feet again, and taking the tiny hands he held them high above her head.

"A little daisy," he said softly. "A pure white snowflake falling, amidst a thousand others, down to earth; a shell of exquisite frailty tossed out by mother ocean on the shore—yet through the Spirit, a rock of ages in the storm."

CHAPTER IV.

LIVING in the unconsciousness of time, the years slipped by unmarked by Bengal.

He had known before her birth, that to the child Mianda, he owed a service. He was conscious now that it had been completed, and that she was ready for development upon another plane.

The night before she reached her fifteenth birthday, he sat alone in the silence, watching the pictures of her future, opening and closing like a door in front of him.

"So be it," he said quietly, as he uttered thanks to the unseen. "She has been a treasure in my life; a soul's companion, but the parting of the ways has come, and each will carry what each has gathered from the other."

Black Mammy was also conscious of a coming change, but in this case her wisdom came more from the facts she faced, than from the ether. The passing of Mianda's grandmother had taken place a few weeks previously.

Already the lawyers had written to Marcus Carlton, and the forgotten, unwanted child, would surely be claimed.

Mianda went forth early on the morning of her birthday. The sun was peeping playfully behind the mists; delicious scents were rising from the dew-drenched grass.

She paused sometimes, to bless a little flower, or to inhale the music of a singing bird.

It was wonderful, this morning silence, gathering nature's rhapsody into her soul.

Someone stood watching her. It was a woman; she broke just like a vision on Mianda's radiant morning. She was small and old and unoffending, with eyes of a seeker who has failed to find. Mianda went involuntarily towards her. She felt the sudden strength we feel in another's weakness. She took the weather-beaten hands in her own; their souls met in a mutual understanding.

The woman's form was bent, but her face retained the story of what it had been years ago.

"God bless you, child," was all she said.

"And God bless you," replied Mianda.

They stood for a moment looking at each other, then the woman thankfully replied: "He has blessed me, in meeting you. Did He not tell me I should find the healer through a child?"

Mianda looked perplexed, but the woman continued: "I want to tell you all about it. Come and sit down with me, for we have met before."

They sat together upon a fallen tree. The air was warmer now; the sun had wiped away dawn's dripping tears.

"I have a child your age," the woman went on quickly, a child sweet as the thoughts which angels drop to earth, fine as a piece of silk, and sensitive as a flower; the child of my old age, who came when all the others had gone from me, but," her voice dropped to a choking whisper, "the child is blind."

Mianda closed her eyes, with a sudden consciousness of invisible sunlight, and a world emptied of flowers.

"Yes," she continued with the intensity of one who has long borne in silence, "Many have come my

way, and tried to help. Doctors and healers of all kinds; but they were too removed, they could not touch him."

"Was he born so?" Mianda asked.

"I had prayed for another child," she went on quickly as if the question were not heeded, "and then there came the promise, just as it was given to Hannah, for with God all things are possible."

"But before he came into the world, my husband had passed from me." She paused a moment, and Mianda's hand, soft, cool and sympathetic rested on hers in understanding.

"He told me that he would not forget; that death was not a separation. It's easy to believe so, when the body that we love is with us; but we are not so strong to face the empty chair. When he had gone I wandered in the darkness; I did not want to see the glory of a thankful world. It seemed to me the sun had not a right to shine; I wondered how the flowers could bloom; I wrapped myself round in my robes of sorrow."

The understanding look Mianda gave, was deeper than a child's.

"And so my baby came sightless to the world."

There was a moment's silence, then she came still nearer.

"You believe that those we love return?" she asked.

"How could they help it, if they love?" Mianda asked.

The woman's voice sank almost to a whisper, like the voice of one who treads on holy ground.

"My husband came to me," she said. Her face looked young and lovely with the memory. "He said so little, and I wondered why, but I felt the glorious

consciousness that he was near. I wanted to rest forever in the reality of it. He seemed to open out a picture to me, a picture of a child like you, who took me by the hand, and went with me through weeds and grasses, to a great white house; she left me by the steps, and a figure stood before me. I can't describe his face; I could not see it for the brightness, but I knew I had found the one to heal my child.

"It was Bengal," said Mianda.

"And after that I wept no more. I knew he had prepared the way. I went on asking, and I waited. I did not pray to have his spirit back again. He had left the blessedness of Heaven on my soul."

Mianda arose and took her by the hand, and walking through the woods, they made the vision real together.

* * * * * * * * *

The woman looked at Bengal with the eyes of an often disappointed seeker. Then with a cry she rushed forward and fell upon her knees.

"I have been searching years and years for you," she said.

Bengal raised her gently, and spoke in calm, quiet accents. In one brief glance, he seemed to read all that she had passed through, all that she was passing through now, and all that she must pass through in time to come; yet he put her courage to the test.

"Sit down," he said calmly, as they walked into the room together, "nothing is done well in haste; you are weary, although the morning sun is shining."

"No, not in body, but in soul," she answered, "for the soul walks with long strides, while the body is at rest."

"Mammy will bring some breakfast," said Mianda.

She shook her head: "I could not touch it, this is a richer banquet far than food, to know that I have found the one I sought."

"So, we neglect the house of God and then we wonder why it fails us," answered Bengal.

She was hungry only to talk about her child.

"You desire your boy's eyesight more than anything," he said, "That is quite natural; no one likes imperfection; it does not belong to God. Had I an animal in this house that had not sight I would gladly give it what it lacked. *Want* of any kind destroys the body. There are many excellent physicians in the land."

She raised her hand impatiently. "They can do nothing, you alone can heal my child."

Bengal smiled slightly, as he continued: "I am no magician, I cannot with the 'Presto change' make winds swing round my way, and waves recede. People of all nations come to me with offers of their gold and silver for my secrets; but they return in darkness, and unhealed. All that I do, each one can do, if he is as simple minded as a child."

She looked at him with fearless eyes; eyes filled with the memory of an unlost vision.

"When the spirit of one we dearly love answers our soul call from across the border, we are not going to doubt that voice," she said.

"So you were magnetized by the voice and by the vision?" Bengal asked. "You believe it is the work of unseen forces to guide us and direct us. How do you know this voice was Truth?"

She looked directly at him; her simple, almost childlike life of purity reflected on her face.

"There are no lies in my heart," she said. "So how could I attract them? If there are lying spirits, then I do not know them, for they are not a part of me.

I keep myself in the pure light of the one focus, the Eternal Good. Turn up a stone, and let the sun shine on the dark things buried underneath it, and they will all flee from its light. The God who sent His messengers to lead me to you, has not brought me here in vain, for you are one of the chosen souls, not chosen by any favoritism, for the Almighty is too great for that, but chosen because you were ready for the fuller life. You are the chosen vessel, and, you will restore my child."

"So be it," said Bengal. "You have proved that you know. You have not rushed in where angels fear to tread. Go home now and devote the time to silence and to prayer. Tomorrow, just at sunrise, bring the boy to me."

CHAPTER V.

WHEN the sun was rising in opal-like splendor over the mountains, Mrs. Thompson brought her child to the healer. A tall delicate boy with fine nervous hands and a brow that suggested the artist.

Neither of them spoke. The woman's eyes were rich with power gathered while at prayer.

Bengal placed his hand upon the boy's head. "Look at me Beris," he said authoritatively.

The child started at his touch, as if an electric current had gone through him; then, with that quick intuition, which often atones for lack of outward sight, he stretched out his arms to Bengal.

"Put your hand on my head again," he said. "I love it. It makes me feel—oh, I don't know."

He stopped, and tears took the expression of the words he could not find.

"A particularly sensitive nature," said Bengal, more to himself than to the mother. Then aloud, he continued: "You have kept your eyes closed a long time, my boy, and there are many beautiful things in the world to see. We all come here to learn something, and you have yet to learn to see these beautiful things. Will you let me teach you?"

The boy clung to him like a drowning mariner would have clung to the rock which meant salvation. Bengal took his hands and turned to Mrs. Thompson. "Go home and keep in the silence," he said. "Join in

our prayers that the shadow, which has been over him so long, may be speedily broken."

* * * * * * * *

There was no sound to disturb the stillness of that upper room. The breath of early morning stole in softly through the open windows, carrying the scent of herbs and grass of outdoor things and flowers which gave their lives in healing. Music, which seemed but the whisper of an evening breeze, was passing through the air. The boy was quick to sense it. The change in his expression showed that he had heard, that he was listening. The inner radio was tuned.

"Another sign that he is ready," Bengal said. "Now tell me boy, what else you sense?"

Beris reached out his hands and walked towards a picture. He stopped in front of it to feel the radiation in his soul. This picture had no title. The artist was unknown. To everyone the work appeared different. Some would breathe deeply, when they looked upon it, like one would breathe on a clear morning, when the air is fragrant as a cup of nectar from a sun bathed spring. Some would fall down and worship, kneel and weep and pray; others hold back in reverence, standing in awe, like one would stand on holy ground.

"Tell me, what do you see," said Bengal.

"I don't see anything, I never see," he answered. "I feel it here, something so warm and beautiful, like fingers on my eyes. This must be light, it touches everywhere," and his body quivered like a delicate flower swayed by an unexpected breeze.

"The second test," said Bengal. "Come now to the oil pool. If the third is satisfactory, then I shall know the way is clear."

The boy walked naturally, scarcely feeling his

way, towards the middle of the room. He stopped at the edge of the golden pool, and his sightless eyes rested tranquilly on the quiet, silky surface. A star shaped light shone in the center. Its golden rays, like tiny searchlights fell on either side. His hands reached towards it. Bengal could feel him drawing from the concentrated power, like the bright flame was drawing from the oil for light.

"What do you see?" he asked again.

"A feeling, not a sight," said Beris. "I can't describe it, but maybe if I think it, you will see."

As he spoke, the light in the center changed its rays. A flame of fire shot upwards, crossed by another, bright and dazzling to his eyes.

"The cross," said Bengal. "It is finished, we look now for the resurrection."

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He placed the boy beneath the rainbow arch, where the colors of "LOVE" might fall upon him.

Then laving his hands in the fountain of oil, he laid them on him and looked upwards.

"God All-Powerful and Almighty!" he cried. "Clear away the mists of the unseen. Let the forces descend upon this child; as Thou sendest Thy sunlight upon the earth to kiss open the flowers, and to ripen the harvest; as Thou lettest Thy rain fall in torrents upon a thirsty ground, as Thou sendest Thy moon to control the tides, Thy stars to direct our paths. Send now the highest upon this child. Open the closed eyes to the earthly visions, as Thou hast opened the eyes of my soul to Thee."

He stood and waited, with one hand laid upon the closed lids, and the other upraised to Heaven.

The child lay passive beneath his touch: silent, with limbs outstretched.

The minutes passed, the quiet of the house was broken by the striking of the clock, and a sudden gust of wind through the pines.

Bengal felt the approaching of a mighty power, and he took the boy's hand between his own.

The limbs were shaking now. The force was coming with a violence that threatened to wreck the sensitive little body.

Beating it off with one hand, Bengal kept his eyes upon him.

"Spirit of healing, Spirit of love," he cried aloud, "descend upon this child with blessing. I have asked for the doors of the unseen to be flung back, so that the forces might descend, but remember that the frame of the child is weak, and that the sensitive flower is mangled by too great element. Deal with him gently yet strongly. Raise him up to perfect life, so that he may see with open eyes."

The child breathed deeply—uttered a cry—tried to raise himself—stretched out his arms to Bengal—then fell back motionless.

The light in the room had grown more dazzling. It shone above their heads like a great sun, where, in rainbow colors the word "LOVE" was written, the letters melted into one great flame, through which looked a face so radiant, so surpassingly beautiful, that Bengal fell on his knees in reverence, and his great frame shook with the power.

He bowed his head and shaded his eyes from the brightness, as through the radiant colors of "Love," that figure advanced and laid His healing hands upon the child.

The air was filled with sudden fragrance, the perfume from an unseen world.

A holy calm fell over Bengal; a still, sweet sleep

through which he heard the many voices ascending in exultation, and almost unconsciously he felt himself joining in their shout of praise. Slowly the light faded, and all was still.

Bengal remained on his knees in silent prayer, unwilling to break the peace of this glorious benediction. For many hours he remained so, with his hand resting on that of the sleeping boy.

Then rising slowly, he laved his face, ran his fingers through his hair, and squeezing the juice of an herb into a glass of water, he drank, and lay down to sleep.

Morning came. The sun was shining, and the light through the colored glass streamed in like flags of victory.

There was a delicate sweetness, like calla lilies and hyacinths upon the air.

The child still slept, and Bengal moving noiselessly, stepped from the room, and entered the silence of the pine wood.

He searched for a while among the grasses, then stopping suddenly, plucked the thing he needed. Filling his glass with water at the creek, he held it for a moment in the sunlight, and murmuring a prayer, dropped in the secret weed; it seethed to the top in a green serpent like fluid, then quickly congealed until it became stiff as wax. He carried it to the house, and bending over the child, rubbed it upon his eyes.

"Beris Thompson," he said slowly, "you are free! Free from the bondage which long has held you. Free as the air you breathe, as the perfume of the flowers and the stars in space. This mist which clouded your eyes will return no more. God has forgotten and forgiven the thought that held you from perfection, and in His name you are free, free, free."

The open eyes in which the light of vision dawned, looked up at Bengal, and then around the room.

It was the look of a mortal stepping into Heaven.

He reached to everything, and laughing, crying, falling, walked across the floor.

Bengal caught him gently.

"You have not yet learnt to measure distance," he said smiling.

"Keep to my hand a little while, the bird has only just left its nest, and the wings are young."

The boy was glad enough to cling to him; this new world in which he walked, frightened while it delighted him.

"Come now," said Bengal gently, "we will go out of doors, and I will take you to your Mother."

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Mianda was seated on the grass with the boy's Mother. The sun was at the meridian, but the cool shelter of the trees formed a curtain of love above them.

The glow of expectation was on each face; all tenseness, all anxiety was gone.

Footsteps came in the distance, the sound of a child's voice, sharp, shrill, and joyous, and the more melodious one of a soul further evolved. The Mother was the first to hear it. Her arms went out, and she received her boy.

The long, long silence was her spoken thanks.

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"Take him to see the birds and flowers, the trees and grass, Mianda," Bengal said, "and then come back to us when you are ready."

The children went together hand in hand.

The Mother turned toward Bengal. "My visions never tell me wrong," she said, "God used you as His

instrument, and He will use you once more for that boy. I prayed for sight, and He has given it, but with that sight He gave him freedom. The closed doors of the world are now open to him." She paused; the tears were trembling in her eyes.

"When a bird finds its wings," she said, "then it is gone, and the one who taught it how to use those wings, sees it no more."

"No more!" cried Bengal, "Is it possible, that you who called this soul from myriads of others waiting for expression, can feel, because you take away its bondage, you will lose it? If such were so; then it was never yours. We cannot separate ourselves from power which is our own. The bird may fly afar, but if the nest is there, it always comes back home. In love you called the soul. In love you built the body. Now, both have freedom, but the golden bond which binds you, cannot snap. Connection made, will live for ever, unless we test it, like a child tests a cemented plate to see if the join is strong.

"Only the color which sinks into our own will make the perfect rainbow, and as your color blends with his, they will remain. This way we make connections, a universe holding each other up by universal power. 'I in you, and you in Me'—Members one of another. We cannot send out a cry but what the power with which we are connected responds like the sensitive plate of the wireless.

"We cannot reach to the unseen but what we grasp hands full, although we cry against what outward vision cannot see.

"You may need me again, but I shall not be here. The power that I have given you will live forever. Absorb it, use it, but the personal Bengal you must never call.

"Christ took His body from the earth plane, because the people clung to personality. The hands that touched, the feet that magnetized the ground, the eyes that looked into their own.

" 'My joy shall remain in you,' He said; and why should they desire more? The personal Jesus might be separated by a thousand planets, but the power was ever present."

The clouds had gathered while they were talking. A flash of lightning shot across the sky. It pierced the earth like a dagger, and struck to the ground the massive oak, not two yards distant.

The woman threw up her hands in dismay. "The children!" she cried.

"Are safe in the storm, as in the calm," he replied. "Mianda has no fear of the tempest; she has stood in the pouring rain with me to watch it many a time, and while by her side the boy will be as fearless."

He walked towards the fallen tree and looked on its immense proportions.

"So shall I fall," he said calmly, "the leaves still fresh, the form still powerful." "Mianda!" he called softly, turning around.

"They are far away by now," Mrs. Thompson said. "She cannot hear you."

Bengal smiled. "Mianda does not answer by distance," he replied, "the thought has already reached her, and she will return."

But this time he was mistaken. Another voice had reached the child, and the consciousness of something so unusual had come with it, that it had broken Bengal's power.

It was Mammy's voice, odd and strained as she stood out in the rain, at the entrance to the wood.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEWS of the passing of Marcus Carlton's mother, brought the daughter-in-law a rough reminder of the past.

In her butterfly life, she never cared to stay more than two minutes on one flower, and never to glance back at the one that she had left.

When she signed the divorce papers to free herself from the boredom of Marcus Carlton's presence, it was mentioned to her about the existence of a child which was left behind, but Marcus had taken the responsibility.

Then the old spirit of obstinacy, which had always caused contention, cropped up in the wife's heart.

It was not that she wanted the child, but like a dog in the manger, she did not want Marcus to have it, so the papers were signed giving her full possession.

After that, Marcus thought little or nothing about it; but while he wandered along in his careless Bohemian life, his mind reverted sometimes to his estate, and to his Mother. He knew her failing eyesight would forbid her to read a letter, and so he let time drift, until the news of her death came upon him like a thunder clap. Then for the first time he wrote to his former wife.

"My Mother is dead; I am withdrawing her allowance, and disposing of the home. The child is in your hands by legal adoption."

Mrs. Carlton, or Mrs. Averrill as she was now, by second marriage, received the news at her pretty breakfast table, one sunny Summer morning.

Her husband, who was seated opposite, was quick to notice the black bordered envelope in her hand. He watched her face somewhat anxiously as she tore it open.

The letter evidently bore the news of a death, but there was no sorrow, only an expression of deep annoyance on her face while she read.

He leaned across the table, and touched her gently. "What is it, my dear?" he asked.

She looked up as if she had almost forgotten his presence, colored slightly, and returned the letter to the envelope.

"It is my affair," she answered briefly.

He arose, with a murmured apology. He was an old man, and very sad hearted. There was nothing to make him feel glad indoors, so he turned into the garden; here something brought a smile to his wrinkled face; the purple pansies were coming up. He remembered how two years ago, in the first noonday of his married life, he had planted in seeds the name that was then dearest to him on earth, and when the little green leaves had pushed their way through the brown soil, he had taken the woman he loved, to look at it. He remembered too, her annoyance. How she had stamped on the delicate flowers, declaring that her name was not going to be a reading book for the servants.

He took up his spade and began to dig. His eyes were very misty, but not with the mist of age.

When left alone, Mrs. Averrill took the letter from her pocket and again read it.

"Why should I take the responsibility?" she said. "The child belongs to him more than it does to me. I think I have burdens enough with this old man for a husband. Still," she added, brightening up, "if she is

pretty, I shall like to show her off to my friends. She must be almost fifteen now. Great Heavens! how time flies."

She went to the window, and watched her husband for a while, as he pottered around with the garden tools.

"One might as well have married a stick," she sighed, "only he has the dollars."

"Joseph!" she called, authoritatively.

He turned, at the sound of her voice, laid down the spade, and shaking the soil from his hands, came towards her.

She locked the verandah door behind them, then placed the letter in his hands. He fumbled for a long time with his glasses; then read it slowly to the end.

"Can't you make it out?" she asked impatiently, "The writing is clear enough."

"I fail to understand it," he said, "What is this about a child?"

For the first time, Mrs. Averrill looked embarrassed. "Oh, well you know," she answered briefly, "She was by my first husband. I never wanted children, but *he* did, and that was how it came about.

The color arose to the old man's face; his thin hands trembled slightly.

"I don't understand," he answered. "You mean you were married before you married me, Florence?"

"Yes," she answered briefly, pulling the skin off the orange on the plate beside her.

"And your husband, he is—dead?"

"No, but as good as dead to me."

"How long was that ago?"

"Oh, fifteen years I daresay, I cannot count the time. I never like to look back on the past. I've got to take the child, that's all. She has been living on

his estate with his Mother and a nurse. I knew she was in safe hands, and that I need not worry, but now that the mother is dead—"

Mr. Averrill was not thinking of the child; he was thinking of how this woman had deceived him.

"I had no idea you had been married, Florence," he said.

"Why, what's the harm?" she asked. "That's like a man! He expects to have the cream of every woman. He may have been married a hundred times himself, but he wants a virgin for a wife. Why should each woman have to bring to him her past, like a composition waiting for correction? How many 'perfects' would be found, if she demanded this of him?"

"You want the little girl to—come and live here, then?" he asked.

"I intend to have her," she replied. "Most people know about my marriage; so that makes it all right. I shall travel West tomorrow."

He was slow to understand her meaning.

She stamped her foot impatiently. "I shall want some money, don't you see?" she said. He drew out his check book, and let her write the sum.

She patted his hand with a smile of satisfaction. But for once he did not respond to her caress.

CHAPTER VII.

MIANDA RUSHED in from the rain-dripping wood, in response to Mammy's call. Her feet were bare; her hands were stained with the juice of the flowers she had been gathering.

The story of a life of freedom was written in the wildness of her hair.

Thus mother and daughter looked at each other.

Mianda had known that she had parents somewhere; known it in as vague a way as a backwoods Indian knows that there are cities far beyond the sea.

She saw nothing in this figure to attract her; a clash of color in the dress annoyed her senses. She looked at Mammy questioningly for a moment. The colored woman struggled with her tears. "This is your mother, dear," she said.

Mianda gave the grand salaam, taught her by Bengal.

In the Temple it was worship. To the woman of society, it was mocking and grotesque.

"My mother is welcome," she said. She was turning away, but Mammy stopped her. Mrs. Averrill's heart was beating angrily.

"Is this the child?" she said. "Is it possible Mammy? You have neglected her to such an extent?"

"It was no neglect," said Mammy, "she's a child of Nature, even to the gold brown of her hair and eyes. She's just a woodland flower drawing to herself the earth's magnetic currents; living in the open, sleeping on the ground. You can't put shackles on Mianda, she was born too free."

The listening look was in Mianda's eyes; her mind was far away from them.

"Bengal is calling! I must go," she said.

Mrs. Averrill reached out her hand, and for the first time in her life, Mianda felt the silky smoothness of kid gloves.

"I have come to take you home with me, Mianda," she explained.

"You know you are my child. I want to see you nicely dressed, and going to school like other children."

Mianda listened for a moment, with her eyes downcast; then raising them suddenly, looked at Mrs. Averrill.

There was something splendid in their golden depths; something that the Mother could not meet. In that brief look, it seemed as if the child read all the past, and withered it with scorn.

"Mammy belongs to me," she said, "and Bengal. Why do you want to claim me when I am not yours?"

Mrs. Averrill flushed hotly, and her anger rose.

"Much they have taught you what is meant by gratitude," she cried.

Mianda kept the steady look upon her.

"If gratitude is what we give to those who give to us," she said, "then I am giving it each day. I give it to dear Mammy and to Bengal. I give it to the flowers that live their lives for me, and to the herbs that offer all their juice to heal the sick. I give it to the birds that sing, and to the sun which makes all things alive; but you, I could not give you gratitude, because you don't deserve it."

And she turned and walked from the room; a straight little figure, with the upright bearing, and easy walk of Bengal.

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Sunrise! after a night of storm. The cool wind carrying the scents of freshly washed flowers, blew across the woods. The webs of spiders glistened like fairy bridges in the grass.

Mianda stood with Bengal underneath the trees. The spirit she had shown the night before, had left her now. The sensitiveness of the little psychic girl was back again.

"This one who calls herself my mother, wants to take me from you, Bengal," she was saying.

"No one can take you where you do not want to go," he answered. "Spirit is always free. The body only can be chained. For the time being, your work with me is finished. This plane called you for service, and you asked to come. You chose to come the way you did. You were drawn to the woods, the Temple and my teaching. There was only one way by which you could find entrance. You chose that way. You chose your mother, and now when she desires it, you must go back with her and pay the debt you owe, and when it is all paid, you will be free."

Her eyes were riveted upon him, she was drawing more through intuition than through words.

"But Bengal's power, and that is Bengal, never leaves you. As we have made the rainbow blend, we shall continue. That which you love in me is always near. That which you want, you can always call. If you desire freedom from the body rather than face the life ahead, then you can have it; but would the warrior leave the field because he sees the battle? Would it not mean dishonor, failure and perhaps return?"

"Come, let us go into the Temple. Let us ask that wisdom for this next initiation may be given."

They entered the beauty of the upper room and stood before the mystic picture, which told its different

tale to all. There was new life to it this morning. A pure white light, gloriously beautiful, shone from the center, bathing their figures in its living rays.

Mianda looked at it intently. Her face caught the divine reflection.

"There is much we can gain together," Bengal said. "You see the brightness of the light. We are touching the knowledge of other planes. Are you willing to go out to meet it?"

"I am willing for anything you tell me to do, Bengal," she answered.

"If you will go out to meet the shining ones, I feel that they have much to tell you, much to interpret, much to give you, that will send you fearlessly upon your way. They have thrown their radiance upon the picture, to let us know that they are near."

She placed her hands in his, while he was speaking. Small psychic hands, fine as a fairy's flowers.

"I am ready Bengal," she said simply. "Let me go that I may learn."

Darkness began to fall around her while she spoke. The picture faded in the distance, like a landscape, when a boat is drifting out to sea.

The darkness of the blackest night, of heavy thunder clouds, of trees, which at the twilight hour, took inky forms above her head, had never caused her heart to beat with fear. But there was something different in this darkness. The consciousness of living, breathing things, of moving presences on every side—things she could feel but could not see. She reached forth her hands blindly, striking out like a swimmer, who dreads the great ocean overpowering his strength.

Bengal's voice came to her, above the sweeping waves of fear, "I can recall you, Mianda, you are still

with me, though the darkness makes you think that we are parted."

Her voice seemed not her own as she replied, "It is harder than I thought, this quest for knowledge."

"Do you remember the seven steps to the upper room, which seemed so difficult?" he asked.

"There were no steps," she answered, and the memory of it made her smile.

"But there were, when you looked only through material eyes. There is no darkness really, you only see it like you saw the steps."

The sudden realization brought the power of mastery. All obstacles were lifted, the earth plane, with its heavy limitation slipped away. She had the sense of climbing to the stars, and Bengal saw her soul, like he had seen it on the night of her descent to earth. He saw that soul arise into the immensity of space, until its sparkling rays were lost in other rays, which took the form of shining wings, passing like lightning through the air.

"Back to the beginning," he demanded. "Let there be light."

As if commanded by those words, an unseen hand reached forth and tore apart the curtains of the heavens.

With the consciousness of earth's sight hardly broken, Mianda shaded her eyes for a moment, stunned by the burst of beauty. Thousands of rainbows, breaking around a throne of dazzling brightness shot forth in all directions, cutting through miles of space, like swords of fire, travelling far downwards, till they formed the branches of a massive tree, with deep wide spreading roots, and shining leaves. And still the light moved onwards, through the darkness, a living rolling ball of fire, blazing like a jewelled diadem, transforming

all to life and beauty, like the spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters.

Radiant forms pressed on each side of her, faces of beings, like living flames of glory passed before her. Souls which lived and loved only in the light, sent forth that love in perfume, richer than the sweetest flowers.

Voices on every side broke into song, as rapturous as the songs of birds, awakening to the glory of a summer morning. Songs to the God of life, from the rays of whose mighty being all life had come, and should go on forever.

Mianda bowed her head in reverence. Weak and small in her spirit body, with garments seemingly tarnished in the light of such unblemished purity, she longed for the great strong wings she felt on every side.

The hand of a shining angel touched her. "No unselfish prayer is disregarded," he said softly. "The wings of the morning are yours forever. With them you can never leave His presence. Go, gain the knowledge you came out for. Take it to planes in darkness, where doors are barred against our entrance. Heavy is the curtain man has hung before the hidden treasures. Go—and if in your search you gather but one flower, you have not come in vain."

"If you could but touch our plane and tell them all you know," Mianda said.

The idea seemed impossible while she voiced it.

The angel smiled and answered, "They would not know us if we came. Some get the glimpse of heaven's glory when stepping from material things a moment, they enter the sanctuary and pray. Few, like yourself, are willing to lay all upon the altar, that they may by their lives become the teachers of the world. With such our presence walks, like it will walk with you, giving

you words to speak and wings to fly, giving you healing in your touch and voice, bringing the brightness of our planes into your aura."

"Look on the tree of life in all its beauty. Man the divine creator, walking earth as God."

Mianda lifted her eyes to the ascending branches, which lost themselves in the blaze of a thousand stars. Through the delicate pink and white buds and blossoms, she saw the smiles of children's faces.

"Why do the leaves divide in three?" she asked.

"The Trinity," he answered. "Father, Mother, Holy Spirit, without which perfection cannot be."

She held her breath a moment, while he spoke. Beneath the lower branches of the tree, two figures moved in perfect harmony—a man and woman, beautiful, radiant in their natural form.

The woman's eyes were looking into his, the light of the divine and glorious was in their depths. In holy reverence they knelt hand in hand, and worshipped at the tree.

"In the image of His glory, God made man and woman as divine creators," said the angel. "And woman standing by the tree of life, still holds the fruit within her hands. What are they doing with that fruit?"

The light changed suddenly while he was speaking. Darkness closed round them, pressing on each side, as if the huge black hands of some monster giant had rolled the sun into a ball of ink, and flung it into space. Where the beauty of the tree had been, the branches became dwarfed, the fruit lost half its luster. The blighted blossoms dripped like silent tears upon the earth. Eden in all the colors of her morning glory was vanishing away.

Mianda caught one of the falling leaves and held

it in her hand. Its luster was all gone. The fineness and delicacy of tracery was lost. There was a change in its division too. The third petal, which had formed the center, was missing.

"The crudeness of creation, when divided from the Holy Spirit" said the angel. "Man snatching for the blossom, with greedy reckless hands—careless, unmindful of the fruit, has dwarfed the tree, which God made perfect when He saw that all was good."

A silence followed for a moment. The scene was changing rapidly. The picture faded into distance. They were looking now on the heavy grey of ashen skies, beneath which icicles sharp as drawn swords hung from the motionless trees. Birds with tongues smitten songless and feathers cemented by snow, limped pitifully through space in their attempt to fly. Rivers which once caroled the joys of life, lay still beneath the bondage of one who had hushed their babble, and silenced their song by a single blast from his icy trumpet.

Away in the distance, mountains stood out against the inexpressive sky, like giants wrapped in everlasting silence.

"I am cold, so cold," Mianda said, conscious for a moment of her earthly body. "Does nothing live except these strange and lonely creatures, moving among the icebergs, striving to keep warm?"

"The age of ice," the angel answered. "Man has imprisoned his own bounty, in his denial of the God of perfect life."

"Does this mean death?" Mianda asked.

"There is no death," her guide replied. "No death, excepting what we make ourselves. You, who are born of Bengal's teachings, know that without asking. Thousands are in the body dead today. Life does not

mean the hands that move, the limbs that carry you across the ground. Life is the consciousness of power. The consciousness the masters have, when they lay their bodies down and leave them, while their souls unhampered, visit other planes. Listen," he added gently, "do you hear?"

The air was filled with sudden music, so sweet and full of love, that Mianda bowed her head and wept, as One wept when He beheld Jerusalem.

"It is the Holy Spirit pleading," said the angel. "Would that the world could hear like you have heard. God is a God of love and mercy, but He cannot change His law, nor keep the pendulum from swinging back, and what man sows, he gathers in his harvest."

A heavy wind began to blow while he was speaking, sweeping across the plane on which they looked, blotting it out by clouds of dust. In a moment the air was full of wild confusion. Like mountains falling to the ground, the thunder crashed on every side. Blinded by lightning and smoke, fighting her way through forms unseen but felt, Mianda lost the presence of her guide. The sound of rushing waters, breaking bonds asunder, beat on her ears. The ground rocked under her. Swept off her feet, and carried by the whirlwind, she lost the consciousness of all but thousands of faces passing in front of her, like flames of fire.

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Knowledge returned with a great stillness. She opened her eyes like one awakening from troubled dreams. Beneath her lay the terrible ruin of the shattered world. Above, she saw the strong and mighty form of her protecting angel. His presence brought her strength back in a moment.

"Why did I lose you?" she asked sadly.

"You never lost me," he replied. "You could not. Did we not promise you the wings of the morning?"

"But the fire, the earthquake," she exclaimed.

"Man fell upon the sword he drew with his own hand," the angel answered. "He consumed his own world by the destructive fire that he had lighted. God is a God of love and not destruction. Love would not see one atom of creation perish. God was not in the fire nor the destruction, nor the whirlwind, nor the storm, but in the still small voice."

"How can man hear that voice?" Mianda asked, looking with the compassion of a savior upon the broken world. "Tell me, how can I help?"

"Pray," said the angel gently. "Pray, as the woman creator. Pray for the grave responsibility you hold within your hands. Pray, and remember, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto me.' Pray that you may know how to use the grand creative gift that the Supreme Creator, in His great love, gave, when He made you one with Him. Pray for the highest expression of that gift. Pray that the glory of womanhood may never be dishonored by a smudge upon its clean white surface. Lift up the cross as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Pray, and your prayers shall call forth in mankind the holiest, the grandest and the best. Pray, as you hold the fruit of the tree within your hands. Pray, and the Holy Spirit shall be ever with you. Your life shall be a sweet example to your sex, your creation blest a thousand times by God."

A great love filled Mianda's heart while she was listening. Bengal had told her many times, in their outdoor walks and talks, that to a love like hers, all nature would respond; that the flowers would follow her with their perfume; that the birds would offer her the sweetness of their songs; that she should lead the leopard with the lamb, as was promised by the prophet

in Isaiah. Love she had always felt, for everything that moved and breathed, but this was a greater love, wider, more comprehensive. For the first time she touched the beauty of the all embracing love of God. ..

As if in answer to that love, a ray of light descended, breaking grey clouds apart; bringing the flush of morning to the skies.

Out of that light, a form appeared, a woman's form, with garments shining like the sun, and a jewel of peculiar brilliance fastened upon the shining whiteness of her breast.

Majestic and glorious she arose like a goddess stepping from a mystic sea. Rising until the shining beauty of her being flooded the whole earth and heaven. Higher and higher in the great ascent she floated upwards, until only the rays from the sparkling gem shone like a bow of promise in the skies.

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Mianda was conscious, suddenly, of someone calling. A voice from the far away. It came again and yet again before she had the power to answer. It was Bengal's voice, welcoming her soul back to the earth plane. Night had already fallen; darkness was out-of-doors, but the upper room of the Temple was never dark.

Her eyes fell first upon the picture; the last thing she had seen before she went out on her journey. It was flooded with the brilliance carried from the plane she had just touched, a brilliance sparkling on every object in the room, turning the pool of oil into a lake of gold.

In a quick flash once more she saw the form of perfect woman, standing upon the blue dome of the world. She carried in her arms a child. A child so God-like and divinely beautiful, it seemed to have

absorbed into its very being the living and pulsating rays and colors of the jewel that before had sparkled on the woman's breast.

The surface of the picture changed again. A clear pure sheet of gold—it hung before them waiting, expectant for the next vibration.

There was a moment's pause—then like the fiery fingers writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast, with the rapidity of lightning the words broke out before them and together Bengal and Mianda read:

THE PROMISE

The Heart of the World is crying for the New Birth of the Nation.

And the Redeemer shall come in the form of Woman.

Not one woman alone but thousands.

She shall enter the consciousness of her New Birth with joy.

In her hands shall be the healing of ages.

She shall give glory to her creation.

Her children shall be born of the rich fruits of her soul and body.

From her womb shall go forth the leaders and builders of the world.

And the woman who bears a child shall be looked on with honor and blessing.

She shall glory in her motherhood like a maid in a jewel that was lost and is found.

Then shall the souls of the old Masters return, beautified, strengthened, made perfect.

And the sculptor shall no more fashion in clay, and the works on the canvas shall fade.

They shall be lost in the glory of the living creation.

And the crippled child shall be no more, and the unwanted child shall be taken in.

And the man shall be the physical strength of the woman, and shall worship her creation as divinity.

He shall kneel at her feet in blessing and enter her gates with prayer.

They shall blend their souls with the unborn, and the trinity shall become as one.

Their brightness shall shine like the early morning, and Man shall again walk the earth as God.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NIGHT before Mianda's departure had come. Her small possessions were packed in a tiny wooden trunk, which would serve until she joined her mother in the city, where a new outfit would be bought.

She sat with Mammy and Bengal under the trees, where the moonlight walked among the flowers.

Mammy's tears were falling though she tried to cover them with smiles. She was looking back over the past fifteen years, the happiest years of her life. Looking back to the time when she stood with Bengal on that quiet night beneath the stars, the night Mianda's soul had touched the earth.

She thought of all that she had gained in those fifteen years and all that the mother had missed.

"If parents only knew," she said, "the joy they throw aside when they give their children into other women's hands to raise!"

"The artist often does not understand his work," said Bengal. "He throws away a perfect and completed canvas, until some wise man comes along and tells him that there is a something he may gain by its possession. The mother of today is many times like that. She likes the more exciting life than life at home. The cooing of her little one gets on her nerves. Love she desires, without sacrifice. She prefers work at the desk or in the store. It is the other woman who has the greatest share in raising her children. The other woman who is the real mother—old maid, though the world may call her."

"Yes," said Mianda gently, as she looked towards Mammy. "And then, just as you say about the artist and his picture, when she finds there is something she may gain through the possession of her child, she takes it from the only mother that it ever knew, and leaves both with a lonely heart."

"Home life is dying out to be rebuilt on a new basis" Bengal continued. "A perfect basis, strong and wonderful, where creation will be understood, and motherhood will be divine. We are finding the lost gate to Eden, and woman holds the key."

The memory of the golden writing and the visions she had seen, lived with Mianda while she listened.

"The power that woman held in the beginning breathes today. Still standing by the tree of life, she holds the same fruit in her hands, and man will eat as long as she will feed him. By her knowledge of that fruit, she can lead him to the heights, or through her lack of knowledge grovel earth-bound with him in the husks, eating until Eden is destroyed. So in their ignorance and blindness have thousands, with their own hammer, broken the steps to their temple. So have they thrown away their jewels, unconscious of their mighty worth. But sight is coming now with knowledge. Lifting their great creative strength, each sex will cleave to each in their desire to serve the world. Our plane will then be filled with builders of the beautiful. The new earth we shall see, where sorrow's waves shall beat no more. We shall look upon the perfect kingdom, and the stone which the builders rejected, shall be the chief stone of the corner."

They were silent for a moment. Peace seemed to still the very air. Peace, such as the prophet must

have felt when the curtain of the future swept aside, and he saw "the highway and the way."

It seemed sacrilege to break such peace, but Mammy realized that time was floating by. The picture Bengal drew was like a fairy tale to her. Though she could never doubt his wisdom, she could not see this unity of power with man and woman. She could not see man happy in the sharing. In the many homes where she had worked, woman had always been man's slave, feeding him well, letting him think he knew it all, or she had fought him, bringing troubles and disaster and divorce.

Bengal responded to her thoughts before she voiced them.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand," he answered, "but where the sexes work with one great aim, and with one purpose, there can be no division. Without this unity of power we cannot have perfection. The ideals of woman need the aggressiveness of man to make them practical. More highly sensitive, more ethereal, less earth-bound, she catches the truths in the ether. He binds them to the earth in strong material form. She is the wings of the spirit, but he the moulding clay.

"There will be no mismating in the coming age, no eager thirst for marriage at all costs, no what the world has called unhappy marriages. Letting her light shine in the heavens, woman will draw her own as surely as the star drew the wise men from the East. Whom God has joined, no man can keep apart, nor put asunder.

"And in this age, women shall sing their songs of joy like Mary and Elizabeth, in welcome to their coming motherhood. No longer as a vessel, broken by physical strain will woman suffer for the gift that she

is giving to the world. In her temple, strong and beautiful, the body of her coming child shall rest, nutured by love, until built into perfect being, it greets the light and the soul comes in to take possession.

"The sculptor worships at the doors of his creation. Each thought he gives to it, is one of prayer. He lives and moves and has his being in his work. He seeks to beautify it night and day. Out of a rough and crude distorted rock he brings forth angels with uplifted wings. One of the greatest sculptors, it is said, wore a small lamp upon his forehead while he worked, to prevent a single shadow marring its perfection. So in the thoughts of building beauty, all will live.

"Born in the consciousness of the kingdom, no child needs any other riches. Strong and protected, it can face the world and all else shall be added."

He turned towards Mianda while he spoke, and their eyes met in understanding.

"You, who were born with this," he said, "you, who have touched more radiant planes, shall carry their protection. There shall be no night nor darkness for you. A soul shining in the whiteness of purity, lights its own path."

"But she has never known the wickedness of an outside world," sighed Mammy.

"She does not need to know it," answered Bengal. "The sunbeam shines through dusty grating and palace window. It has nothing to do with the place it enters except to carry its light. Protected? the bright angels she has drawn, will never leave her. There is no protection stronger than purity, and from the beginning of all things she built that firmly into her aura and has kept it there."

Mammy believed all he was saying, but the human side was very strong.

"But shall we meet again?" she asked, for it seemed to her that this precious page torn from her book of life could never be re-written.

She reached out as she spoke, and took Mianda's hand. It lay like a pure white flower between her rough and crooked fingers.

"We can never be separated Mammy," Mianda said. "You, Bengal and I belong too closely to each other. The same sun shines over us. The same moon, the same stars, the same sky. When we can see the same things, how near we seem to each other. I have proved many times that spirit knows no distance, and when you want me, you only need to call and I will be there."

Mammy was comforted by the certainty of this conviction. She felt she was not losing all, when no longer she could see with material eyes the lithe and graceful little figure, flitting among birds and flowers, running in the wind with arms uplifted, and garments flying, until sometimes, she had asked herself whether it was wings the child possessed instead of feet. Though her heart was dreading the approaching loneliness, she was sensitive enough to get the undertsanding of Mianda's spirit.

"We must not spend one moment in regret," said Bengal. "There is no time for it. The world is too full of want. Mianda is entering her new incarnation, and there are others now, who need the mother's heart. Always someone who needs our help by the roadside."

"If we could just have kept her a little longer," Mammy sighed. "It came so suddenly, it was so unexpected."

"The law, which first swung the pendulum of life's mighty clock knows the right time for all things," Bengal answered, and he arose and lifted his hands in benediction over her.

"Go forth my child, a teacher and creator," he said gently, "blessing everything you touch like you bless the little flowers smiling with love and joy up at the sun. What matter where you are, or whether your path be one of thorns or roses. The shepherd knows the way by which the sheep go home. The divine hand guiding you makes no mistakes, and on whatever road you walk, someone is waiting, wanting you.

"Go as a woman clothed with the sun, a universal mother, letting your love shine on the just and unjust, and so shall everything you touch be blessed, and God's love make a glory of your life."

CHAPTER IX.

MIANDA SAT opposite her Mother at the big dining table in her new home. It was evening, and after three days and nights on the train, both were weary.

It had affected Mrs. Averrill to irritability. Mianda, regardless of food, leaned back in her chair. Her brown eyes were dreamy, she was looking beyond the room and the table.

"I ought to have brought you here long since," said her Mother. The voice struck with a jerk, like a rough shake that rouses a child who is sleeping.

Mianda sat up, and wondering what she had done, began to eat quickly as if to make up for lost time.

After the parting with Mammy and Bengal, the journey had been like a mist. She was trying to recall it, like one feels in vain for a dream that is lost.

She raised her eyes now and looked at her Mother.

"You could not have brought me before," she said simply, "the time was not ripe."

Mrs. Averrill continued her dinner in silence. She was wondering how she could tame this strange child.

"I mean," said Mianda, as if she were conscious her remark was not followed, "there's a right time for everything, and that time had come for me to be here."

Again they were silent; then Mianda arose and opened the window. The night air was delicious. The moon was full. Beyond was a long and glorious garden.

She stepped on the porch without an apology, went down the stone steps and walked amidst rose trees.

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It was a soft voice that roused her. She had fallen asleep under the trees, with her head on her arms.

Some one had touched her, as gently as Bengal, but not with the same power. She could not have slept more than ten minutes, but she awoke with a sense of refreshment which made her feel strong. The man who bent over her was old and quaint. He would have been the interest of artists searching a poet or prophet. His hair was thick and abundant, waving in white lengths over his forehead. There was almost a childish purity in the deep-set kindly eyes. Mianda was answering his thought, before he had asked the question.

"How could I catch cold?" she was saying. "This is a radiant night, I did not intend to shut out its beauty by falling asleep so soon. But after all, what did it matter, I had a glorious dream. Do you ever dream?" she asked.

The old man's eyes grew misty. The poet's expression deepened. "I have had dreams, little girl," he answered.

"Then tell me about them," she persuaded. "Don't be afraid; I understand these things."

He smiled at the thought of her wisdom.

"You understand more than most of us, then," he said.

"I know," said Mianda, "but that only makes it better for you."

He sat down beside her, under the rose tree. The petals were falling like scented rain.

"If I were a poet, I'd write something beautiful about this," she said.

"All people who understand dreams must be poets," he answered.

He was watching her in the silvery moonlight. She looked like a poem dropped straight out of Heaven itself.

"I think you are lonely," Mianda said gently, "that's why you met me. We are most of us lonely I think, on this plane. Maybe that's why we're here, to learn the big lesson."

"And what is the lesson?"

"To get to that point of loneliness Christ got to, when He realized He never could be alone," said Mianda.

They were silent a moment. She had filled his blank screen with new living pictures.

"And where is your home?" he asked gently, as if such a question were sacrilege to an angel developed out of the air. He almost expected her to point to the stars, but instead, she briefly explained that the house in the distance was where she had now come to live.

"Why, that is my home," he cried in amazement.

Mianda's eyes brightened with inexpressible joy. She took his hands into her own.

"I believe you're my Father, aren't you?" she said.

He did not answer. To his tender old heart, craving for love, it was beautiful to have her think of him so.

And this was the child! The child Mrs. Averrill had left neglected so long.

Perhaps if he told her he was the man who had taken her Father's place with her Mother, she would

drop his hands and send him away, and he clung to those hands with the desperation of one, who hungry for love has found it at last.

"Why did you marry my Mother?" she asked.

He smiled at the abruptness of the question.

"Why do you ask me?" he said.

"Because you are not an ordinary man, and she is such an ordinary woman."

"Oh, hush," said the old man, gravely and with that respect which the commandments teach, without stipulation, "you must not speak so of your Mother."

He was sorry the next moment, for the correction. The longing in her eyes went right to his heart. He intuitively felt he had touched a great center, when he spoke the word Mother.

"Tell me about where you lived, before you came here," she said, like one who desired to change the conversation.

It was beautiful to him to find some one who wanted to know. His mouth had been closed on these subjects for weeks.

"It was only a little home in the country," he said. "A small house on my land, round which the fields stretched, a living glory of flowers. I can smell the pink blossom as the bees buzzed upon it, and it often seems now that I can feel those warm winds waft languidly over the mountains, on those hot summer nights. My orchard of fruit was a glory: the trees were living people to me. I had watched them grow up, like a Father watches his children. They all had a different story to tell."

"They lived," said Mianda, "I understand. I used to be frightened of trees when a child. They seemed to moan the story of ages."

"And first thing in the morning, when the robins were singing and the glossy coats of the blackbirds shone in the grass, when the air was as fresh as a draught of cold water, I used to wander alone, and thank God for Life."

He stopped in his story, like one who pauses half way, to look back on a view.

"Go on," she said gently, "I understand."

"I had lived there since childhood, with no education, except what my Father could give me. We had a few books, which we read and reread on those long Winter evenings when the snow lay thick on the trees, and halfway up the windows, and the wind howled for days, wide over the prairie.

"So I lived as a boy, glad and contented, gathering more knowledge from nature than books. Pleased with the world; my own little world as I thought it."

He paused again. "I think I'll leave off here," he said.

"No, go on," said Mianda, "I can guess all the rest, but I want you to tell me."

"I never married. I had never read much, nor thought much of love for a woman. My soul seemed to find its outpouring in Nature. But why am I telling you all this—when you are a child?"

"Only in years on this plane," she responded. "I have passed through all that. I know the ideal." He smiled—and encouraged by her words he continued.

"The women folk around, good women, awakened nothing in my soul. I continued to live on that farm, after my Father and Mother passed on. The years glided by—the joy of each season. I began to grow old. Then something unusual happened: one of the men struck oil on my land, and I became wealthy. The business in connection with this took me to the city.

I had never been in a city before. The rush of it all was so new to me after the prairie. I think I about lost my wits. The beautiful stores, the lights, and the movement. The great mighty buildings, and the grandly dressed women.

"I went and took rooms at a costly hotel. A boy had thrust into my hand the advertisement. He must have known that I was strange in the city. I thought it was kind of him, and I wanted to show my appreciation. I was dazzled and bewildered by all that I saw. I did not want to go into the grand dining hall. I went by a side door into the garden.

"It was just such a night as we have on the prairie. A big silver moon and thousands of flowers. They had stuck colored lights like birds in the trees, and while I was looking, a rocket went up and broke in a shower of stars over all. I seemed lifted to Heaven in the whole scene."

Mianda had got ahead of him in the picture.

"And then my Mother came," she said.

"Yes," he responded, without any surprise. "I remember I was standing under the lilac, but it was not so fragrant as the scent of her hair. She stood close beside me. She was watching the rockets. Once she made a remark, but I could not answer. I would sooner have dared to speak to an angel. All power had left me. I could hardly hold to my limbs."

"You got the vibration right away," said Mianda.

"I did not sleep that night. She had taken all my sleep from me. I did not leave the hotel next day, nor the next. I stayed there hoping sometime she would speak again. But when she came into the room I felt my power go. Once she dropped her handkerchief, and I picked it up for her. She thanked me, but she turned away. I had never written poetry. My spelling was

not good. My penmanship was poor. I had always sung aloud my praises on the farm; but I was seized with a desire to write. The prairie, the flowers, the bees, were all forgotten. I could only see a woman's eyes."

"If woman only knew her power," Mianda said.

"I began to write about her, and as I did, she came towards me."

"It was the vibration of your soul," Mianda replied.

"She came towards me, and she spoke. She was so good and kind. I wondered why I should be worthy of her notice."

Mianda was thinking deeply. Her beautiful eyes were looking far out.

"It was your evolution," she said at last.

"And then I gave her what I had written; and when she smiled, it gave me courage, and I asked if I could walk with her into the garden.

"The days went on. Intoxicating days. Days when I realized all I had missed. I had lived my lonely life upon the prairie, when in the outer world were the angels.

"God! how I dreaded the parting. I could not help but tell her something of my thoughts. She listened very patiently to me, and then—"

He broke off suddenly. His voice was drowned in tears.

"I love her still," he said at last. "But what's an old man worth to one who is so young and beautiful. Nothing, except his dollars, and when he's gone: she'll live on those, and he will be forgotten."

"No," said Mianda strongly. "No one lives to be forgotten. Your pure love will help her sometime, even if she does not understand it now."

"You comfort me," he said. "Your eyes are like your Mother's, only there's something different in them. A tenderness—" He hesitated for another word.

"Maybe I got that tenderness from you," she said.

"No, little girl," he answered sadly. "You have another Father somewhere. I wish you were my child, but you are not, and if you leave me now, I shall feel lonely."

Mianda did not look surprised as he expected. She seemed to penetrate the past all in a moment.

"If I should see my Father," she said slowly. "I think he would not be so close to me in soul, as you."

CHAPTER X.

IT DID not take Mianda long to become perfectly at home in her surroundings.

As Bengal had said, the world she stepped into was new. Each morning she awoke to the knowledge of something fresh and beautiful, undiscovered the day before.

The long wide garden with its broad lawns, and winding walks, through borders of cultivated flowers, was like a fairyland of joy to her. Beyond this were the rugged cliffs, on which the restless ocean boomed the story of a never ending power. For hours she would stand spellbound at the top of the hill, watching the glory of the light upon the waves.

"She has never seen the ocean before," said Mrs. Averrill, thinking an apology was necessary for this strange behavior on the part of her child; but at the same time she felt gratified at the quick way Mianda fitted into society, after her wild free life in the woods.

She had decided not to send her to school. She was afraid that her hopeless ignorance of books might reveal neglect. For any little eccentricity, she could explain to her guests that the child had lived with old people and had had all her own way. But in school things would be different, so a tutor should be engaged to teach her at home.

Geoffrey Davis was one of the numerous society men who were constantly coming under Mrs. Averrill's favor. Her love of company and her open house kept life free from monotony.

When the glorious halo, by which her husband had surrounded her, had melted in front of his eyes, he left her to do as she pleased with his money, and he lived his own simple life finding joy in his garden and daily walks, keeping as much as possible away from the house and the guests.

Mr. Davis willingly accepted the position as tutor. He congratulated his lucky star that he had fallen into an easy way of earning money. He was by nature, the clever, idle man who drifts. He had tried many professions and failed in them, through want of pluck and persistency. He would not teach in school, because school teaching demanded labor, but the work would be simple enough with a girl of fifteen, and especially Mrs. Averrill's daughter.

Teaching Mianda was very different, however, from what he expected. Her quick intuition, her sensitive psychic power was so far ahead of his books, that on the first morning he was hopelessly lost.

"You've got too much a smattering of all things," he said, when her knowledge on every subject surprised him. "I shall have to make you keep to one room for a time."

She studied his words, but did not oppose them.

"I think I have been like Bengal," she answered. "He resented a roof, he wanted to see the stars and the sky."

"And who was this Bengal who had such ideas?"

"He was my teacher. He seemed to have all the knowledge he needed; but he got it from the spheres to which he belonged. He had no tribe; he had lived out of that. He embraced the whole world; all men were his brothers. Yet some people feared him, because of his wonders. I think we all fear what we don't understand. Bengal taught me to read. He said

that was necessary, when we went among people, but philosophy he had no need to teach, I brought it all with me."

"From where?" asked the tutor.

"From the schools I had passed through, before I came here."

He looked at her searchingly. He was beginning to doubt whether she could be sane.

"You had better continue your reading," he said. "We did not come here to visit."

Mianda took up her book and continued with Shakespeare.

"I like this story," she decided. "It sounds like the dear old fairy tales Mammy would tell."

The tutor was glad he had a chance for correction.

"Fairy tales," he cried contemptuously, "you would compare the works of a genius to those trashy things of the nursery? I am thankful to say such reading was always beneath me, even when I was a child. But of course," he added apologetically, "your stock of literature was undoubtedly limited and you read what you could get. Now you will have a wider scope to choose from."

Mianda was eagerly scanning the Tempest, "Prospero was able to release imprisoned spirits—I love that," she said, "and even the winds and the waves obeyed him. That's nothing unnatural, all the old masters could do it, and we shall be able, when we know what they knew in the fairy story."

"To control the air and the waters," cried Davis, "you talk like the silly courtiers in the time of King Canute. They tried to flatter that wise king by saying the waves would recede at his command. Poor simpletons they looked, when he ordered them to take

his chair to the beach when the tide was coming in, and he made them a laughing stock for their folly. But then you have not read English History," he added.

"Oh that was different," said Mianda. "Those men did not believe that he could do it and neither did he, because he had not the consciousness of dominion."

Davis was looking at her vaguely. He was glad she did not give him the opportunity to speak, for he would not have known what to say.

"I think I shall like Shakespeare," she continued. "He seems to have been able to see so many things that others could not see. I used to wonder when I was a very little child why Mammy did not see the fairies in the dusk. I have walked and talked with them when I was by her side, but she always said they did not come to her."

"But Bengal taught me that we all have different sight. Where Mammy only saw a tree or flower I could look right beyond its petals and could see the soul."

"What rubbish you are talking," said the tutor. "Where did you learn it all?"

Mianda laughed, it was a laugh that surprised him, a laugh so different from any he had ever heard. So different from the forced unnatural laugh of society, or the foolish giggling laugh of girls in their teens. It was a laugh like a sudden burst of song, or outpouring of music. He had seen her smile many times since she came. She had a way of smiling to herself when she walked alone. A way of looking up in the midst of her studies and smiling like she might have done had some one walked into the room. He decided she looked pretty when she smiled, and though it was a breach of etiquette, this smiling over nothing when there were serious minded people round her, he had left it

as a fault which waited with many others for correction.

"Why do you call it rubbish?" she asked. "All that I know I learnt in many ways. No, I had not a big library, but it was big enough for me. I only had two books to read, the Bible and fairy tales."

"A wonderful combination," said Davis, who had studied neither.

She did not notice his sarcastic tone. "I learnt much from both," she continued. "I learnt much from Bengal, and the woods and flowers. Fairy tales were interesting because they contained so many prophecies that have come true. Don't you remember the little prince, who floated over the world on his magic carpet, and who put on silver ears over his own ears, and was able to listen in and hear what was going on everywhere? Don't you remember the shipwrecked sailor, who sent a thought into the air and immediately vessels caught the thought and came to his help? No one knew then that we should do the same; that radio and wireless would come true for all."

Davis was listening now with a certain degree of interest.

"The Bible I liked to read, because I so adored that mighty Master, who told us all that He did we could do too. The One who knew God so well, that nothing was impossible for Him. These things I learnt from reading, but most of all I learnt from going to other planes. I learnt how we must make our planet beautiful like every other swinging in the dome of space."

"You know then that there are other planets?" Davis asked.

"I know, for I have seen them."

"So have all," he answered, "all who have sight."

Mianda smiled again. It was a smile he longed to correct her for. A smile, without a seeming cause.

"All will see them sometime, I believe," she said, "but we have put a heavy veil between ourselves and those bright worlds. Our mirror is so dim and dull. We have lost track of the vast electric wires, connecting us with every plane on which perfection lies. I know there are such planes in space—planes, where creation is divine, and love is God."

She stopped. A peculiar atmosphere had fallen over the room. Geoffrey Davis arose.

"The clock is striking twelve," he said. "I will not keep you over time, although you have not done much work."

They walked to the door together, and out into the garden. An aeroplane was floating overhead, cutting its way through the ether like a beautiful sea gull against heaven's blue.

Mianda raised her eyes. "Another fairy tale come true," she said, "and when we understand, and can control the air like we control the water when we swim, we shall lift our bodies and fly like that plane. Feet are such clumsy earthbound things; it was intended that we should have wings."

She put her hands on her sides for a moment and breathed, then throwing them upwards, she ran down the garden walk with a speed that overtook the plane.

Her loose white sleeves falling to the elbow, caught the silver of the sunshine, as with arms now outstretched, she rushed or floated through the air.

Davis strained his eyes to keep pace with her rapid movement. He watched her fascinated, until like some huge bird, with lifted golden head and strong

white wings, beating their way through space, she vanished into the green of distance.

"My God!" he cried, almost unconsciously, "I believe that she can fly."

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When Geoffrey Davis, an hour later sat talking with Mianda's mother, he was his cool practical self again.

"I tell your daughter, she has too much a smattering of knowledge," he said, when she asked him for the verdict. "She does not understand in the least, what she is reading. Her head is chock full of confused ideas. She compares the genius of Shakespeare's plays to the trash written by Hans Anderson. Not that I have read much of fairy tales," he added, to redeem his character.

"Ah, I shall have to look after her reading," said Mrs. Averrill. "You see she has always lived with her grandmother, and the books she provided for her might not be suitable. I really should have had her with me long since, because being with his mother, she has developed many of her father's peculiar ways, and above all, his habit of talking of things about which he knew nothing."

"What was your object in bringing her here?" asked Davis, although he knew such a question was quite out of place.

"Her grandmother died and she had to be taken care of by some one," replied Mrs. Averrill. "I told you that I never understood her father, and the further away we are from each other, the better we like it. I see touches of him in Mianda at every turn. Her way of going hatless and of answering before you finish your sentence. But of course all this she will gradually lose when she enters society."

Almost unconsciously, Davis smiled. It was because the vision of Mianda, with arms extended in her aerial flight, rose like a picture before him. How was he to fit such a picture in with the life of the fashionable woman, with whom he was talking.

He hurriedly looked at his watch.

"You will stay and have lunch, Mr. Davis," she said. "I will order it to be served for us alone; then, we shall have more opportunity to talk of Mianda."

Davis was conscious that some one was waiting for him, but the nonsuccess of his life showed that he had never been a man of his word, so far as time was concerned.

He stayed, and enjoyed Mrs. Averrill's company, finding the froth of her conversation less upsetting than the wine of her daughter's. They chatted till long after luncheon, but the subject was not Mianda nor was it her studies.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO PEOPLE were standing under the arch of flowers, talking, when Mianda hurried to meet her old friend at the foot of the garden. It was nothing new to be coming across people so. The house was always lively with guests.

Something unusual made her turn to look, this time, however. It was the soft velvet coat of the artist, Percival Fontaine.

Their eyes met for a moment, then she was gone.

"Who was that?" he asked the lady to whom he was talking.

Robina Mallet smiled as she answered, "that little oddity is Mrs. Averill's daughter, one of the most original girls you'll find on the coast."

He lifted his brows in amazement, saying, "From where did she get such a daughter and where's the resemblance?"

"She seems to have developed out of the air," said Robina. "I suppose a child by a former marriage, though she looks every bit as old as her Mother. She's quaint and unique, and I think she's pretty."

"No, not pretty," he answered. "Pretty's too common a word. She is beautiful—wildly beautiful. She carries the sunlight and shadow, the rich tints of Autumn in her eyes and her hair."

"I've not talked to her much," said Robina. "She spends all her time with Mrs. Averrill's husband. Poor old dear, I'm glad he's got a companion, he was

terribly lonely, and what could he have in common with a young wife? She wanted his dollars of course, that was all she married him for. I'll never forget her shame and dismay when he sat down to afternoon tea soon after their marriage. I passed him the toast and he took the whole plateful, and put it down on his knee. It was terrible to keep one's face straight, and we all felt so sorry for Mrs. Averrill."

The artist was not listening, his thoughts were still on the face he had seen. He was keenly sensing a picture.

"Naturally this girl would agree with him better than with us," Robina continued. "She's been brought up with old people, that's what makes her so quaint. They say she's only fifteen, but she appears much more."

"She is an expression of more than one thing," said Percival Fontaine. "Girlhood—Womanhood—with the Spiritual essence of the Angel."

"I should imagine her to be a creature of moods, like all children of nature," Robina replied; "but she's just as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp, one never has a chance to get near her before she is gone."

But the cry for the picture was in Percival's soul. The girl and old man together, what a wonderful combination! But no, he thought he preferred her alone.

He walked up the cliff by the sea, thinking deeply. He had been cruelly disappointed in his year's work. He had nothing, he felt, to present to the public. For weeks and for months he had lacked inspiration, but today, the light of a pair of brown eyes had brought life to his soul, and once more he longed for the canvas.

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When Percival put his suggestion to Mianda, they were standing on the clff overlooking the sea. He had found her there alone one evening, when the moon was full and the tide coming in.

"I never cared for the ocean," he said. "Those waves represent man's broken ideals arising in glory, to be dashed to pieces upon cruel rocks."

"To me it is full of a constant call," said Mianda. "The call of the souls from over the border."

"I have heard that call, but not in the ocean," he answered.

"It's come to me in the heart of the city, in the noisiest throng; when the roar and the din were deafening to the outward ears. It's come like the still small voice in the unseen. The call to the ideal I could not reach."

"And what was the ideal?" she asked.

"The ideal that always ended like those waves," he replied. "Ended in being dashed out on the shores it arose to meet.

"I often wonder why one should have the aspirations of angels and the ability of man to express them. I remember the first picture I looked upon, when I was a child, before I had ever laid paint on the canvas. It was entitled 'The Muck Rake.' I call it up now, in all its bright colouring. I can see the protruding eyes of the man; wild, gloating with greed as he reached for the pennies he'd found in the straw and dirt of the street.

"I can see the bright angel, strong and resplendent, with fair hands holding the glittering crown."

She smiled understandingly. And he continued.

"It came to me then just what we were missing; we could all have the crown, if we lifted our eyes from the pennies.

"Somehow I have always failed in my pictures. They say that my thought is too big, and so is my canvas. I take too daring subjects, and I had better keep to portraits and landscapes. I am seeking for something. The colors—"

"I know," said Mianda. "You see what you fail to express. You want to dip your brush into the gold of the sunset, and into the living flame of the flowers; you feel you could drink the rich pink from the soul of the rose, and crush out the lilac's scent on the canvas. All true artists do, but they will not stand still, like the Masters.

"The colors of Nature must come from her heart. The Masters knew this. Nature taught them her secrets."

"It seems such a pity," said Percival sadly, "that when great men pass on, they don't leave their gift, so that others may use it."

Mianda smiled gently. "They are bound to leave it," she said. "How did they get it? They reached to the highest and brought it down here. They looked to the crown, and not to the pennies.

"Here it lives and is waiting to be used by those who are Spiritual and sensitive enough to get into its power! The Masters go on to something more glorious.

"Great men do not leave only material work behind them. They leave lots of unexpressed force; the force that they brought to the world in doing their work. Get in touch with the connection they made, and your work will be as great, if not greater than theirs."

He looked at her wonderingly. She did not look pretty now. Her face was weird and drawn; and the eyes looking out, were the eyes of a seer. The hands

had the force of those who mightily struck at the marble.

"I think if you sit for my picture, I shall make the success of my life," he said suddenly.

"No," she responded. "You will make your success without that. It does not matter who sits for your picture; you will make your success because you have made the connection."

CHAPTER XII.

ROBINA MALLETT looked on Mianda with admiration. There was something wonderful to her in this odd little soul daring to walk so fearlessly on a solitary path. Something facinating in the clear ethereal beauty which contrasted so strongly with the artificial faces of those around her.

It was difficult for her to imagine anyone coming under the influence of so powerful an aura without being held by its electric force, and at times it hurt her keenly to think that of all men Geoffrey Davis had been chosen for her tutor.

"I'll be jealous of you if you look so charming," she stopped Mianda on the garden path by saying, "Geoffrey Davis always had an open eye for beauty like most men and he'll sure enough be falling in love with you!"

Mianda smiled at the idea while she answered. "There's nothing about me that would attract him. I'm just an oddity, a very stupid girl in his eyes, and in my eyes he seems a very stupid man—but I know we can learn from everyone, so I do my best to study his laws."

"Oh well you may say that," replied Robina, "but I know he thinks you wonderful, he has said as much to me."

"He changes in opinion and in love," Mianda answered, "he's groping in the dark to find himself."

"If you don't beat all in your candor!" laughed Robina. "If you were not so cute I'd feel right angry.

Geoffrey is my sweetheart, the first one I've had. I've always been fastidious over mankind. I thought I was born to be an old maid. I pity old maids from the depths of my heart—they're the empty box for every one's rubbish. All people impose on a woman who has no fighting man to protect her. All things are dumped on the unmarried sister. She's got everyone's children to mother and care for, and yet she's looked on as somebody, nobody wanted.

"I have only one reason for wanting to marry. I always had an inborn love of little children, especially the tiny, helpless baby, which had been dropped down here, so lonesome and so unprotected. I used to feel so sorry when I heard its plaintive little cry, which seemed to ask compassion from the world. I was mothering babies before I was thought old enough to know where they came from. That part of their history was a dark secret. Something I was told I must not ask about till I grew older.

"I never believed the stories of the cabbage bed. Some people think that children do not use their brains. But I did associate a newborn babe with angel visitors, though I could not see why a good God should make some so sweet and pretty and others—poor little dears, with broken bodies.

"I might have learnt the truth in the profane way most have to learn it, when their awfully modest parents close the door upon them. I might have learnt it in that way but for a dear old nurse, who came into our home; she must have been a poet, now I think about it. I remember how she showed me the eggs of pretty blue in the robin's nest, and explained how we planted the seeds for the little flowers, and gradually it dawned on me so beautifully the holiness of

birth. The birth of a baby seemed just like the pink rose bursting from the tree or the robin breaking through the egg."

"And the perfume and the song, the soul," said Mianda.

"But for all this knowledge sweetly given, my dear nurse lost her position. She was dismissed. I never saw her again, but I never forgot the beautiful way she taught me the truth. It filled me with the sense of great responsibility. I wondered if I ever could be good enough to create a child, and I resolved I would not marry till I met the man I should be proud to call its father."

"And you think you've met him?"

"Yes, I do. Geoffrey's not all I might desire, but men are not born in heaven, and I don't think I should want a man who was. And of course you know I'm no spring chicken. Last birthday I was twenty-nine. But I don't believe in these young marriages. I am rather in favor of an eleventh hour romance. You know your own mind when you have passed the Romeo and Juliet stage. You want to live for love, then, not to die. Geoffrey has faults, I own it, but he has one saving grace, he's fond of children, and the man who loves children is sure to make a good father."

"How does he love them?" asked Mianda. "At a distance?"

"You talk like an old grandmother," said Robina. "And yet, you can't be so far past the stage of childhood yourself. Anyway, I have made up my mind that Geoffrey shall be the father of my children. We are going to be married next month, and maybe a year from now I'll have my first baby. Just think of the joy of possessing a child all my own. A child that no

one can take from me. I have cared for hundreds of babies and loved them, and just when they'd settled right down in my heart, the mother stepped in, and took them away. I've sacrificed lots for other folks' children, but only to lose them when I wanted them most."

"I understand," said Mianda, as she thought of Mammy and Bengal.

"Will you laugh if I tell you I've seen that baby already! A beautiful child! I've seen his blue eyes in my dreams. Of course his eyes will be blue like Geoffrey's and mine. I suppose all people romance over the future however practical they are. I've seen in that future how when we grew old and sat by the fire, we would not be lonely, like people who marry and will not have children. I've seen us sitting in the fire light, contented and happy with a grown up family of blue eyed sons and daughters round us." And she laughed with joy over the picture.

"You will call a beautiful soul to the world," said Mianda. "A child who will be the glory of your life and name. You are paving the way by your welcome and thoughts."

"You really think that some souls are attracted to us in the unseen?" asked Robina.

"I know it," Mianda replied, with conviction which stopped argument.

"I never thought of it before," said Robina, "but these last weeks I've been conscious of somebody near me, and I've just been loving that child as if he were here. I can't explain it like you do. I've not got that pretty, delicate way. I'm strong and I'm crude. I have not the glamour of moonlight and fairies.

"I used to think it was only my want of a baby

that made me feel I had one in my arms, but now I see it wasn't that at all; it was because the soul was so near, longing to come."

"He has a mission to fulfill through you," Mianda said. "That's why you hear his call."

The vision was in Robina's eyes. "He must have a perfect body," she continued. "I have seen so many brilliant intellects held back because of the infirmities of the flesh. I've read the lives of so many great writers, who were invalids, weak in the physical, struggling through pain and suffering to give their jewels to the world. I want my child built strongly on all planes. That's why I'm wanting him to be a boy. Women have such a little chance. My father used to say they were just born to be loved and taken care of, for if God gave them brains, it broke their constitution. He called them dainty flowers, that bowed their heads when the rain storms filled their cups too full."

She saw Mianda smiling, so she added, "That was not meant for you, you are a miracle—a woman-man I'd call you, if you were not so dainty and—what was it Geoffrey called you?—impish yet spirituelle!"

"Woman has yet to recognize her power," replied Mianda. "When she has added physical strength to her great endurance, and bravery of soul, then we shall have a force undreamed of in the world, for in all ages she has stood by the cross, holding mankind up by her love and power."

"I am not concerned about the house we are going to live in," continued Robina. "My wants are small enough, as Geoffrey knows. So long as we are happy with our baby, what matter if we are in a castle or a barn? Rich people are not happy, at least I have never found them so."

"They would be happy if they had the knowledge how to use their riches," said Mianda. "Money is just the platform for the song of life, but those who have it often let it choke that song, while they are singing."

"It surprises me," went on Robina, "how many newly married people talk of nothing but their homes, their carpets and their gardens. I've even known expectant mothers, far more interested in the new house that they were going to build than in the building of their coming child. So careless how they live and what they look upon!"

"But the new age is coming," said Mianda, "when to all women creation will mean what it means to you. You have always been the cosmic mother. And even if by physical birth the child were not your own, you would love it just as you have told me you have loved hundreds in the past."

"Were not my own," cried Robina, and a sudden look of fear entered her eyes. "You do not mean that you think I shall not have a child?"

"You will always have children," replied Mianda, and the one whose soul is now beside you is bound to you through all eternity, so let us bless it—let us dedicate its life anew to God."

Robina longed to ask her more, but there was something about the way Mianda turned aside, when she had finished conversation, which prevented people following.

CHAPTER XIII.

THAT NIGHT Mianda dreamed she wandered in the woods with Bengal. Around them all was gloriously clear. The sun intensely bright. The landscape had no distance. The air was blowing soft and warm, carrying the scents of fragrant flowers.

Half conscious all the time that she was dreaming, she tried to rub the vision from her eyes. But Bengal's hand was resting on her—strong, calm, imperative in mastery. This was no dream, for he was there, wrapped around in flames of living light, which had dissolved all mortal essence.

Bengal had passed beyond. She never doubted it. His voice came to her with the same power and sweetness, the same healing that it always carried when they walked together.

"Rejoice with me Mianda," he said gently, "that my service on this plane is ended, and the doors of the Eternal, leading to the vastness of the great beyond are blocked no more against my entrance. Freedom came gloriously and for ever. The chain broke suddenly, but I wanted to linger for a while, so that once again, for the last time I might speak with you.

"I say for the last time because so many ages will roll by and many worlds we will pass through before we meet again."

"Can I not go with you?" Mianda said, as she felt the freedom and the life of his rejoicing soul.

"Not now, for while my work is finished here, yours is only just begun. Yours is a work I could not

do because you asked to come that you might do it—I asked for other things."

Mianda reached her hands out to him. "I want to know more of my work," she said. "To know what I can do to help the world."

"To know, you must come with me," he answered. "I cannot tell you. With your own eyes you must behold the vision. But I can give you freedom from the body. I can take you with me safely, and can give you the return."

"Then take me with you Bengal, I want to see, I want to know."

"Rest for a moment," he said gently. "In our great search for knowledge we would rush in where angels fear to tread. Be still and not too eager, for the place where you would walk is holy ground."

Mianda lay back on the pillows. Gently she clasped her hands together with the simplicity of a child at prayer.

"Blessed are the pure in heart," said the voice. "They shall see God."

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Mianda arose and followed him. She felt her earthly body drop away like an unwanted garment, the shining form she took was light and lovely as a sun-tipped cloud. They stepped into a dense and heavy mist. The pressure of it almost hurt.

"This is the breath of thought," said Bengal. "The thoughts which put chains on the feet, and hold them, like the mud in the ditch holds the feet of a man, whose eyes see the light of the broad highway."

"Whose are these thoughts?" Mianda asked. "Where do they come from?"

"They are the thoughts of a selfish universe," said Bengal. "I had better say, a world blinded by igno-

rance, for selfishness cannot exist where knowledge lives. Here in this mist we find the souls straight from the earth plane. Some still have ties down there which hold them: others are held by those who call themselves their friends. Look at that little child beside us. The weeping Mother holds her in her arms. Thought arms, like weeds around a lovely flower, choking and keeping it from growth.

"That child was glad to drop her little body. She had been sick so long, and no one seemed to have the healing power to free her from her pain. The children are all waiting for her coming, in the little angel world, to which such fair, sweet souls belong. But the Mother's thoughts are holding her. She cannot unfurl the wings of freedom to bear her far beyond the mist.

"There's a man who for years was earth-weary. He was seeking a land of rest. He had his sweet picture of Heaven, but the earth thoughts are holding him here.

"There's one who was head of an army. He's studying to find the way. He had no preparation beforehand. His chart and his compass are lost."

Mianda looked down to the earth plane. Souls breaking from their bodies were entering each moment, into the thick mist of earthly thought. The wail of pain from anguished hearts, stabbed through the ether like a sword. Swamped by a sudden sense of sorrow she bowed her head upon her hands.

"Look up," said Bengal, strongly, "look up, if you would lift these wandering souls out of the mist of matter, into the consciousness of God. Say to the darkened plane beneath you, that Eternal love which rules a million worlds, is ever able to take care of what it has created. Speak freedom for each soul, if you too, would be free to see beyond."

Mianda raised her eyes, and reached her arms forth in the blessing. The answer to her call broke like a star above her, clear as a searchlight thrown to wandering ships at sea. It ran with shining swiftness through the ether, evaporating mists and breaking darkness. She walked upon its steps of shining glory, drawn by the living, breathing power above.

"I, if I be lifted up," she whispered, "shall draw all unto me," came the reply.

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"Now we have crossed the border of the thought world," Bengal said. "That cruel border formed by earthly ties. Tonight we have freed many souls; shown them the light which forms the pathway to the great white throne."

"It was so simple," said Mianda, "if only those on earth could see."

"Could see how all their tears of sorrow put bondage on the soul," said Bengal. "Could see that every prayer of help and blessing forms one more light upon the way. That every smile of joy is a bright rainbow, bringing the promise of God's love.

"Through your unselfish prayer this night, that little child has found the lover of the little children. The weary man has heard the call—'Come unto Me.' So must we live, to help and not to hinder. To loose and not to bind. To push all onward to progression in the great whirlpool of this everlasting life."

They walked now on a path of calla lilies, the scent of which was healing as the touch of God. They stopped to breathe the beauty of the atmosphere, lulled by the sweetness of undying love.

"Here you will get the vision," Bengal said, "the vision that I brought you out to see. You stand amidst a million whirling worlds of which you have no concep-

tion now. One world alone you have to help, one world to heal. The world which you have left. The world which needs you more than any other. Look down and tell me what you see."

Mianda placed her hands above her eyes. She seemed to look into eternal blackness.

"I cannot see," she said, "I hear the cries of pain, and that is all." He placed his hands over her head. "Listen," he said, "and tell me what you hear."

"I hear a prayer that's strong and beautiful, it mixes with another, and another, ascending like sweet incense up to God.

"The prayers of our world's saviors," he said gently, "prayers for the worlds for which they lived and died, for which they toiled with broken hearts, and faced the cross of shame; for where eternal love exists, there is no self."

Mianda clasped her hands in anguish as she asked: "And did they die in vain?"

"No," he replied. "Their prayers are holding our world together. Their love has kept it from destruction. They came to speak the word that could not die to give the knowledge that they knew was truth. The world received them not. They met the crucifixion of the body, but their imperishable power still lived, and on that power expressed, the world is holding up today."

"Will they not come again?" Mianda asked. "The Masters and the Saviors of the past? Will not wars end forever? Shall we not see a world made glad, and full of peace and love? Will not this old condition be crossed out? Shall we not have the great constructive lives again? Will they not come that they may teach us all things? If they are Masters, can they not materialize the body, and come in human form down

to the earth which needs them so. Were we not promised that the souls of the old Masters would return?"

"They will, but not quite in the way you think. The spirit can materialize the body, but not as yet for any length of time—not long enough to stay and work with the material. Too often has the Temple they would build, been heartlessly destroyed half finished.

"Once more by ordinary birth they have to come. Once more through woman's love which asks for service not for self, and lays its all upon the altar. They call for welcome to a world which cries for peace. A weeping world:—war-stained and battle-trodden. History repeats itself. Look back two thousand years."

A cloud came sweeping heavily across the planet, like some dark monster eating up the light. It rose and formed into a cross upon a hill.

Mianda closed her eyes, but Bengal touched them gently. "Wait if you would see all," he said.

"Around the cross a light had broken, like a ring of glory, shining on the faces of three women. Faces, divinely tender, strong, made beautiful by suffering. Faces of women who had dared to stand and hold the power. Women who saw the glory of the resurrection.

"So shall the women save the world," he said. "They have stood bravely by the cross at every period of its history. Stood till the old condition was wiped out, and darkness gave place to the dawn.

"Again they hold Salvation in their hands. The birth of a new nation finds its way through them.

"The song of glory Mary sang, called down a Christ to earth. The Mothers of the world are its redemption. Serving their God and welcoming Motherhood with prayer, they'll draw the Masters and the teachers to their plane.

"The return will not be sacrifice, it will be glory.

"Ye must be born again. 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert the pathway for our God.' The greatest song of victory will not be sung by warriors from the field. The greatest song shall be the song sung by the Prophet of the ages."

"FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN."

"And the Redeemer shall come in the form of woman," repeated Mianda, remembering the Promise. "Not one only, but thousands."

And while she spoke, the light blazed forth as dazzling as the noonday. The air was full of songs of victory, loud and triumphant as the angels sang above the hills of Bethlehem.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE WAS something wonderful to Percival Fontaine in Mianda's appearance when she entered his studio to sit for the picture.

He had thought her a girl of wild and original beauty. Robina had described her as a creature of changes too strongly akin to nature to look always the same; but this morning the richness of her coloring was intensified by a peculiar radiance, bright as the worlds through which she had walked.

"You never told me what you had chosen I should represent in the picture," she said.

"I did not know," he replied. "There are so many pictures I see in your face.

"Last night; you will laugh when I tell you, you looked like some old philosopher. This morning you have the face of an angel, or the face of a mother, who could embrace the whole world."

"The mother who could embrace the whole world must surely have the soul of an angel," she said.

He smiled a little sadly. "I never knew the love of a mother," he answered. "My mother passed out in giving me birth. I've often longed for what the world calls Mother's love: and I think man longs for it more as he goes on in years."

"And that is where woman fails," said Mianda, "she is mother alone to the children she brought into the world. She has drawn the fence so tightly around them, that no little starved orphan finds room to creep in. We want the woman whose arms reach out widely.

Arms of love like the Christ's which say: 'Come unto Me.' "

Percival arranged his canvas and screens, and continued:

"I call to mind once, no, I need not call it, it is one of those scars not properly healed, which remind us sometimes of their presence. A dark day in Winter with grey leaden skies: a black cheerless landscape, and trees that seemed as if they could never be glad any more.

"I looked in an art store and saw a picture. The colors, the subject, had set my ambition aflame. I had penniless pockets, but a soul full of dreams.

"To get money for art school; that was my cry. I took up an agency for a popular book and set out to canvas the city, on the day I described. I walked block after block, climbing steps and stopping at houses tired and hungry with the vision of the paints and the picture, like a star in the darkness.

"One woman, I see her face now. It was heavy and dark. She told me she had two boys of her own she was putting through college, and if I had not parents, I'd better work in a store.

"One woman slammed the door in my face. I remember her, too; she was cooking the dinner. The smell was delicious, I was terribly hungry. I wish I could feel hungry like that again. 'How could she bother with things of that kind?' she asked—her own children would be in any minute wanting their dinner.

"Another house, too, where the mother told me the same, and while she was talking her boy came in at the gate. I remember the loving arms she put around him; I remember the change in her voice when she

said: 'Mother's waiting with dinner for her darling boy.'

"One woman, wherever she is God has put the bright stars in her crown, listened to my story, and then she said kindly: 'I cannot take the book, I've not any money, but come in I'll give you something to eat. I've a boy of my own, and God knows he might be on the road some day, and I'd want a good woman to help him along.'

"And when she said that I did not feel hungry, I wanted to cry, and cry like a baby, to cry away all the heartache I'd gathered that morning."

"She was a Mother," Mianda said gently. "The others were not, they were only the women who bring children into the world."

Percival looked at her intently. The deep sympathy in her eyes was intensified by the wonderful light that she carried.

"You brought me an inspiration last night," he said softly. "I went home to dream of a picture."

"Tell me about it," she said.

"It was called "The Birth of a Nation."

"Yes," she replied without any surprise.

"I believe the birth of the new nation will be brought about by the women."

"You certainly touched the vibration I walked in last night," she said with a smile. "We must have entered the power together."

"If we would born a new nation," he continued, "woman must befriend her own sex. I have looked on the beauty of children well formed, happy and joyous; and then on the cripple, the lame and deformed. I have asked myself—'Who is responsible?' If a woman is a mother in soul, she will be quite as wishful to see her

sister bring forth a beautiful child to the world, as she would be to bring one herself. There would not be nearly the shirking of Motherhood if we reverenced the Mother with honor and glory and made life more beautiful for her during creation. If all would stretch out the hands of love and of help, and send the prayer of blessing for the unborn; if we surrounded the sensitive girl, passing through her first experience, with the consciousness of love and joy, we should not have an imperfect child.

"Are we not dwarfing and damning creation when we point the finger of scorn to the unmarried woman, carrying the gift God sends to the earth; condemning what she must bring to the world, and holding back all that might have been power in her child. I feel when I see such a woman, I want to take her to my heart with all consciousness of her womanhood forgotten, to reverence her as the creator, and to lift her with her creation right into the white light of an understanding God.

"When we view life through an uncurtained window, we shall break condemnation. Are not we all living out what we have to express? As we live through our bondage, and pay off our debt, we shall return with free hands, and a karma wiped out.

"There were two Marys," said Mianda softly, "and Jesus loved them both. He loved the bruised reed, the bird with the broken wing, the crushed trampled meadow sweet, for He knew the scent of the flower still lingered in the wounded petals. And yet, in the face of His words of love and forgiveness, we are not only condemning our Marys, but follow their creation with the stain.

"Take heed, said the Master, 'whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were

better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' When our eyes are cleansed to the purity of His vision, then we shall hold each creation in the light of His love. Over the long months of waiting, we shall stand by each woman, giving to her power and courage and attracting to her a soul born of God. Then we shall have the race for which we are calling and the cruelty of race destruction will end."

"The first years of a child's life," replied Percival, "those first impressions which sink into the subconscious are the things to live with us forever. The background of the picture is painted once. I know of two boys, twins, found in a gutter, left by a woman the world had not helped. A wealthy family took one. They raised him in fear. They kept the slush of the gutter ever around him. He grew on their thoughts. At the age of seven he had got quite beyond them. He went back again to the place of his birth. The other was raised by a man who had given his life to the service. His eyes were closed to all but the Christ. Nourished and fed by spiritual love, at the age of seven, the child he had raised stood on the platform, and I hear now the ring of glorious freedom coming straight from an unhampered soul, as he sang—I Am a Child of a King."

He sketched for a while, then laid down his pencil. "I shall have difficulty I know in getting your face," he said slowly. "There is something about it no canvas could take. It shines like the brightness of a summer morning. The best of us are feeble at imitation; we can, to a certain extent give what belongs to this plane, but when it is something so far removed—" He looked at her earnestly. Their souls seemed to meet in the look.

"You must have been a much wanted child," he began, but stopped in the sentence. The face of her mother arose in his memory, and the sight of it clashed with the statement.

"Wanted by Mammy and Bengal," she said. "They are all I remember of my childhood."

She spoke of her childhood, as if it were centuries past.

"Bengal wanted me because he knew I had something to do. He dedicated me to the world when he watched for my star before birth.

"Mammy loved babies and her own were all grown. She wanted another child to love and to raise. I grew up between them, and we were wonderfully happy together. Those days I shall never forget. I look back on them now like I would on a beautiful view from the top of a mountain. The times when we sat on the rocks in the woods and listened for the call of the flowers that wanted to serve. I remember the first time I heard the voice of a flower. It came like the note of a bird, only softer and sweeter. I followed it in the dusk. Mammy was frightened because I left her side in a moment and rushed through the tangle of bushwood, but of course Bengal knew I had heard what she did not hear.

"The voice only came once, but it left something on the air that I followed. I found the flowers all growing together, small golden flowers—scores of them, forming a circle, sprinkled with dewdrops. Like a ring glittering with diamonds, they lay in the grass."

"And you plucked them, or did you leave them in undisturbed beauty?"

"I plucked them because they wanted to serve. We laid them on the doorstep, where a child was sup-

posed to be dying. They say she dreamt all night of angels, and next morning was well."

"It sounds like a miracle," Percival said, "but miracles are going on all round us if we had eyes to see."

"I love to go into the woods before daybreak. There was a story that those who saw the young moon with the sunrise should see dawn in her chariot riding the heavens."

"And of course you tried to see her?"

"I didn't try, but I saw! Bengal and I were going through the woods together. The trees were so thick we could hardly see a sign of the sky. We took that path in the early morning because of a certain herb Bengal gathered, which grew in places hidden from the light. Suddenly we came to the end of the trees and Bengal called to me 'Look at the sky!' "

"The glare of light stunned me. It came with such suddenness out of the darkness—Gold, blazing like fire and crimson and purple and through the midst of it dashed four magnificent horses, snow-white, drawing a chariot of amber with wheels like the sun. A woman stood up in the chariot, holding the reins. I shall never forget the beauty of her face nor the colors of her flying garments. I was blinded by the glory—and—there are some things in life that words are too weak to explain. I could not describe it even to Bengal. I could only feel it here."

Percival saw the light of it within her eyes, and the flash of colors in her aura. He wished he could have caught that light and harnessed it upon the canvas.

"Those were wonderful times," she continued, "and then—the upper room." She stopped again and drew her breath.

"The upper room," said Percival.

"I cannot tell you of it," she replied. "Some day you may enter."

He did not seemed surprised that she should say this, nor did he ask the meaning of her words.

She got up suddenly and looked at the time.

"I expect my tutor is waiting for me," she said. In a moment, she seemed to have changed from a woman to a child.

"Your tutor!" The artist smiled at the absurdity of it. "What had an empty headed Geoffrey Davis to teach to a soul of this kind?"

"You began by trying to paint my picture," she said, "but instead we have looked through a gallery!"

But the picture, which failed to appear on the canvas, was painted deeply within.

CHAPTER XV.

ROBINA SAT on the cliff overlooking the ocean. The tide was coming in heavily. The wind blew strong and cold. The moon shone bright in the Heavens. The night was a dream to all lovers of beauty. But Robina looked out with eyes which saw far beyond it. Eyes filled with the angry red light of passion and pain.

Geoffrey Davis was going to be married. She had crushed his letter to pieces but it lay now next to her heart. The letter for which she had waited these six long weeks of vacation when none knew where he was.

He had met a girl with a fortune. How could society blame him. He had looked past love's eyes to the dollars.

He had possibly thought of Robina, the robin that sang in the storm, but he had found the bird with gold feathers and the glitter was more than the song.

She felt once again for his letter. The words had burnt into her soul. They came to her like his kisses. Through each one she saw the face of a child.

Mianda was sitting beside her. She was too tense to feel the love of her arms. She had gone away from all people. Loneliness represented her future. It healed more than presence.

"When a woman loses her lover by death," she was saying to Mianda, "there are thousands to mingle their tears with hers. But when he throws her down for another, they think she is foolish to weep or to care. Yet the passing beyond would be less of a heart-

ache than to see a golden romance in the ditch and a shining ideal stripped of its glory."

This was his wedding night. Today before God's sacred altar he had given the holy vow, but given it to another.

His voice ringing with melody and sweetness came wafting mockingly to her in the "For better or for worse."

Was it possible that he could silence memory? Did no vision of the past arise? Was there no sorrow, no regret for what was left behind?

Mianda was not surprised at the ending. She had known Geoffrey Davis' character from the beginning.

"I would not believe what people were saying," Robina continued. "The eyes of true love will not see flaws. I would not believe it, although he stopped coming and went away without bidding good-bye. Oh, the long days of waiting, for the letter I thought he would write. The long wakeful hours when I prayed for the morning. The sickening sight of the postman going past, or of receiving letters from those who meant nothing to me."

"And then the blow fell," said Mianda.

"Yes, and then the blow fell. His letter finally came, and as I tore open the seal I prayed for strength to read what was in it. I read it, and read it and read it again. Then I crushed it to pieces, but I straightened it and read it again, hoping, believing I might make something different out of the words.

"When a great tower falls, for a moment we can see nothing. Our eyes are blinded by the dust, our ears are deafened by the noise. We look for what was, and we only find ruins."

Mianda was mentally grasping the picture.

"Even yet, I cannot believe it was Geoffrey Davis who wrote it. Geoffrey, the man whom I loved."

"But it wasn't Geoffrey you loved," Mianda explained. "You loved what you thought him to be. It was the reflection of the ideal you saw in his soul. When the rising sun looks into the stagnant waters of the pool, she sees her own glory shining there. Keep the ideal Robina, and some day, you will find it real. It need not come through a Geoffrey Davis. In this great Universe, your own awaits you. 'Whom God has joined together, no man can put asunder.' "

"No, but a woman can, and has," Robina said.

"Never," Mianda answered. "If God had joined you and Geoffrey no woman could tempt him from your side; no gold filled hands, no proud ambition; what we love, and what is ours, will never leave us. The very fact that he could take another woman, is proof that he was not your own."

Robina was only partly listening. Her mind was going burningly over the past. She was living again the nights on the cliff, when he was beside her. She was feeling again his arms and his kiss.

"She will have his child," she was saying. The thought was like thorns in her flesh. "And to think how little he cared. My arms have grown weary for children, for a baby to hold to my heart. He knew that my wants were so simple. I did not ask for what most women ask—a rich mansion, and costly gowns, and a chauffeur to drive my car. I just wanted love, and the shelter of a little home. A little home, I didn't care where, so long as he was in it, and we could live and love and have our children. I was willing to have worked like the wife of a laboring man, and have washed my baby's clothes, while she sat on the hearth-rug and cooed to me in the firelight. Only a home and

children. And at Christmas time, a little tree and a baby's stocking hanging by her little cot. Such simple wants, Mianda. Were they too great for God to grant?"

"Maybe they were granted in a bigger way than what you asked," Mianda answered. "Maybe you may live to kiss with joy the cross that seems so heavy now. Geoffrey Davis will reap his own harvest. Man does not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. He sinned against the truest heart that will ever beat for him. He sinned against his own child. The child, who had claimed him in the unseen. That child belongs to you. The physical body may find expression through another but the soul will find its own."

Robina turned to her wonderingly. The passion was still in her eyes. The tears burnt dry in her heart.

"It is a beautiful fancy, Mianda," she said, "and you will find consolation in it, because you are so different from others. You've got a world of your own. You fly in the clouds and see wonders—but I live right here on earth. I deal with the things that are real. The soul of the child may be mine, as you say, but I am whole, Mianda, I want the body as well."

Mianda looked far out like she did when she saw a picture. The cliffs, the inwashing waves, the girl by her side, had all faded. The gold tipped clouds, which were drifting before her psychic vision, parted suddenly, forming a sunny circle of shining light round the gentle face of a little child. From side to side, the restless eyes were looking. The little hands stretched out to grope for what was lost.

"What do you see Mianda?" asked the girl.

Mianda started, rubbed her forehead. "I saw the child—your child. The soul materialized through

clouds. But you broke the message that I might have gained."

"The child—my child! What do you mean?"

Mianda gave a sympathetic smile. "It's hard for you to understand," she said. "You think you have no child, because you cannot hold it in the body, but how could any woman love creation like you do, unless she were a mother? The soul that claimed you needs you now. A soul that will bring glory to the world. That soul belongs to you. You must receive it—help it in progression."

Robina was staring into the darkness. Her eyes psychically burnt through the distance. The human side of the woman was burning with jealous hate.

"I cannot," she murmured chokingly "I cannot welcome a soul when my soul is ground to the dust."

Mianda was looking upwards. Her prayer went into the silence.

"Oh soul so old and yet so young in this incarnation help me to heal this mother's heart."

Robina did not hear the words nor see the vision, but a sudden sense of calm fell over her.

Around the cross broke the sunrise of the resurrection, a certainty that on the path, which looked so bleak and dreary, she would not walk alone.

CHAPTER XVI.

SPRING had come in with laughing face and golden garments. All Nature was responding to the victory of a resurrection.

A year had passed rapidly since Mianda had settled down in her new home. She had learnt much in the time, seen much, and studied deeply. She mingled little with the guests. A cool restraint held her at arms length from her Mother.

She talked often with the dear old man. The perfect understanding in their hearts had grown with time. They found a calm and peace in the silence of the garden, or far out on the shore, where the waves lapped gently, and the world seemed at rest with God. Tonight they sat in the little summer house together, watching the sky in the royal robes of sunset.

Mianda pointed to the bright reflection falling on the rifted clouds.

"It looks like the wings of angel-children flying upwards to the throne of God," she said.

"You believe in angels, don't you, Mianda?" he asked.

Mianda looked far out. The expression in her eyes which came when she was thinking, deepened.

"I believe all worlds are peopled with them," she replied, "but some are seemingly more beautiful than others. Some are more gloriously pure, with robes washed white through many karmas. I believe that there are angels on this plane, if we have eyes to see them."

He looked at her and smiled. "And so do I," he answered gently.

"The soul can never change," she went on slowly. "God only breathed one breath, when He created.

"If some of those bright shining ones we get a glimpse of, have had a greater consciousness of this, can we condemn those who slipped down on the vision? You remember the story of the drop of water in the gutter that did not know it was polluted until it saw the fairness of the sky. But it only took one cry to lift it upwards, till it rested on the mountain top, a flake of pure white snow.

"However dark the night clouds are, we know they hide a million brilliant stars."

"It's great to have your heart," he said, "and it seems to me we've got to see the angel in the gutter before we can be with those who dwell afar. I had a dream once," he continued "I think it came in answer to my prayer. I dreamt that I awoke and found myself in Heaven, and there were thousands waiting for me there. Angels with shining wings and smiling faces, rising up high, one above another, like flowers floating in a breeze. But I stood aloof, ashamed to go among them, they wore such clean, white robes, and I had on my old soiled overalls that I used to wear out on the ranch. But in spite of that, they floated round me until I felt just wrapped in garments of their love. And then there came a voice. A voice that I had heard before. A voice that used to talk to me when I was lonely.

"I never seemed to know where that voice came from. It was speaking in the sunset, in the flowers and in the blossoms on the trees, but when I heard that voice again I lost all fear. I raised my eyes and saw in shining form what I had felt, but never seen."

They were silent for a moment. Mianda had traveled ahead of his story and was lost in the reality of the vision.

Slowly the old man continued, as if he were living through it all again.

"He looked at me, and as I met His gaze I felt that every pain that I had carried, every wound and sore was an illusion. The peace of it, the strength, I never shall forget. I looked down at my clothes, and saw that they were white and shining like the others and in the joy of it, I lost the dream."

"What we call dreams, are life's realities," Mianda said. "When you looked from your soiled clothes up to Him, you got your shining robe."

"I should not mind the passing, if I could go straight like that," he said. "To pass easily. God's work quick and well done. No long drawn illness, just to sleep, and awake in His home."

"You will," said Mianda gently, "and that sweet glorious dream will not end in a rough awakening."

"I've often thought," he continued, "when I walked out in my garden on the ranch, that Heaven could not be more beautiful than that. Why, in the early morning the air seemed like a cool draught of water on the lips, and the blue sky smiled down on me and the birds seemed as if they could not sing loud enough their prayers of thankfulness.

"Even the old dirty stables and outhouses were turned into fairy palaces, because thousands of roses, gold, red and white, climbed over them. I've stood and looked at the blaze of color, as I saw it from our doorstep. I've looked from the hard, strong plants to the little gold-eyed pansy, and then to the woods of flowers which seemed as if they couldn't grow thick enough nor fast enough.

"And at night when the moon shone, and the wind came up tender and soft, and swayed the boughs of the trees till they touched my face with their greeting, I've reached up and blessed them for living. And I've wondered if Heaven could have things more glorious."

"Heaven is just where we make it," answered Mianda, "because your eyes were opened Spiritually to the beauty of the flowers, the trees, and the message of the wind, you found your Heaven in all of them. You entered the Kingdom right there."

A look of peace and satisfaction settled on his face. He took her hand within his own. She felt the power of his blessing.

"If an old man's prayers are worth anything, dear child," he whispered, "then you should get the strength of mine. Over the long, long nights, when I am watching for the morning, I pray that you may always be the blessing that you've been to me, and that the dear bright angels may protect you, until we meet with them in the Hereafter."

Mianda put her arms about him. The tears were wet upon her cheeks.

"God grant I may be worthy," she said gently, "be worthy of the power that you have called, worthy to live and breathe in that pure ether which draws these radiant beings to earth, and so lifts earth to Heaven."

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Morning stole in with noiseless footsteps. Mianda was suddenly wakened by the insistent call of a bird. The notes were so sweet and triumphant, that she listened in rapturous silence.

Softly at last she arose, in answer to the message, and went towards the room where her old friend slept.

She did not expect a response to her knock. The voice said inwardly that all was well. He was sleeping, with the same expression of triumph on his face that had been in the sweet song of the bird.

"God's work was quick and well done," she said, as she gently kissed him. "He has found the reality of his dream."

CHAPTER XVII.

MIANDA CAME slowly across the fields. The sun was shining over the hills. The day was like a holy dream. Life, life every where. The flowers springing up with laughing faces; the leaves bursting into fuller glory on the trees. She walked with a song in her heart. In her eyes was the radiance of a Spiritual memory.

Mrs. Averrill came hurrying to meet her. The last will and testament of Joseph Averrill had been read and the contents had fallen like a thunderbolt on the listeners. That his wife should be cut off with a weekly allowance, and this girl Mianda, no relation at all, appointed his heiress was beyond comprehension.

In spite of Mrs. Averrill's anger there was something in Mianda's serenity and poise which was restful. She quietly listened to the whole story, and her face remained calm as before. She stooped while she listened, to pick an unnoticed flower, and arranged it to blend with those in her hand.

"He did not understand," she said simply. "I shall not need money. You can take every cent, if you'll give me my freedom."

Mrs. Averrill looked at her vaguely. It took more than one asking to follow Mianda.

"I mean," she explained, "I don't want his fortune. I have Bengal's Temple. I have all the power; I just want free hands. When *he* was here," she unconsciously raised her eyes upwards," I was happy to stay. He needed my help, and I needed him. Now that is finished, I want to be free."

"Free?" cried her Mother. "Why, you are not married."

Mianda smiled gently as she replied. "There are more bonds than marriage that keep us in chains. I want to go back to where I belong. The Temple, the woods. The voices are calling. There's something. There's some one awaiting me there."

Mrs. Averrill gasped at such an idea. Mianda had been so quiet over the past, that she hoped it was buried far beyond reach. But the memory of it glowed in her eyes as she spoke. A sweet, holy memory, which made her look beautiful.

"It is my life," she continued, as her Mother stood silent. "You have given me here all that you could. A good education, and the best clothes. But the soul cries for freedom. The sea gull does not want the diamond cage. You can tear the wings off a bird, and give it all the food it can eat, but that will mean nothing. It wants its wings."

The tone of her voice so rich and appealing made Mrs. Averrill raise her eyes to her face. For a moment their souls seemed to meet on one plane. In one psychic flash she saw what Mianda had passed through. It mirrored the chafing of her own soul. She also had fought and cried for her freedom, held like she had been in a loveless marriage by a strong chain of gold. The cry of this soul seemed so different, and yet it was one with her own.

"All right Mianda," she suddenly said. "If that is your life, I am willing. If you don't want the money; you shall go free."

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Mianda stood with Percival Fontaine looking on the picture which was to be the masterpiece of his life.

He smiled, when he heard of the path she had chosen. "The bird of the air must have freedom," he said. "It is not love, but self, that wishes to have and to hold. If there is one spark in you that belongs to me, then we can never lose each other. I don't believe in twin souls, for the soul should be complete in itself. I believe in companionship on the roadway of life. Ships that wave their bright flags to each other, and are strengthened in knowing they don't sail alone upon rough seas."

He turned to his canvas again as he spoke. In his eyes was the glad satisfaction of the artist who knows his work is well done.

"The Academy will tell me I have taken too large a canvas, and as usual got ahead of the average brain in my subject," he said. "But whether it is accepted or not, matters little, its message will one day flood the whole earth."

The painting was strong, vivid, and lifelike. A world wrapped in darkness, intense enough to sink into the soul. Fields torn up by war. Homes shattered. Beauty destroyed by cannon and sword. And amidst all the refuse, the women were walking, seeking the living among the dead.

One woman alone had lifted her eyes to the hills, and the light there had broken the darkness around her. She stood robed in the glory, the chief central figure, strong and resplendent with arms outstretched to the vision of life. In that light she saw what the others were seeking, the faces of those who called for return. Mianda again repeated the promise: "And the Redeemer shall come in the form of woman."

"And the stone which the builders rejected, shall become the chief stone of the corner," said Percival.

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Mianda's trunk was packed for the journey. She went tenderly over the haunts, where she and the old man had often walked together, reverently bidding good-bye to each spot he loved. She stopped to look on his garden with blessing, happily conscious that his presence was near.

He surely rejoiced that she had her freedom. She sat down by the arbor and thought what Bengal and he had meant in her life.

The darkness of night had fallen around her. Above the tall pines the stars were appearing.

Voices were talking a few yards away. The sound of her name broke up her thoughts. The voice that answered her Mother's was strongly familiar. It carried her back twelve months, to the school room. It brought up the memory of that night on the cliff with Robina. Geoffrey Davis might have been kinder, society said. He might have chosen a stronger and more beautiful way. He was renowned as a flirt, flickle and worldly, but he did not deal with one on his own level, when he dealt with Robina. The knife had cut deep, but the girl was still living. Man dies beneath the crown of thorns, but woman wears that crown around her heart and lives to bleed in silence.

Mianda kept motionless in the darkness. Their words fell strongly on her ears. They came with a sharp stab of pain: a sense of deep disgust and loathing. Her Mother and Geoffrey Davis were talking of marriage—of marriage, and the flowers were not yet withered on the old man's grave.

"Dolly and I were never mated," he was saying. "We found it out, and so we parted. She's going abroad tomorrow. It's not likely we shall meet again. The baby? Well, I paid a good old woman to take care

of him, until she found a home. There's lots of people ready to adopt a child. No one need know whose he is, because we never wanted children."

Mianda stopped her ears and rushed away.

Then suddenly joy sprang up within her heart. She clasped her hands in thankfulness for answered prayer.

"The child," she cried. "The child." And rushed to tell Robina.

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A little wayside cottage outside which the red geraniums grew. The tired old woman had lain down to rest. The firelight flickered cosily upon the walls, and shone upon the cradle where a rosy baby slept.

Robina rushed hatless down the road. Her face was pale, yet radiant with expectancy. She burst in at the cottage door, and gazed upon the cradle. Her eyes grew passionate and full.

The woman raised her head, looked at her wonderingly. An army might have looked upon her so, without effect.

Her gaze was riveted upon that cradle, hungrily, covetously, like the miser on his gold. Then she rushed forward, fell upon her knees; turned down the covers from the baby's naked limbs. The warm odors of the little body rose to meet her.

A sensation like quickening Motherhood vibrated through her frame. The baby felt the power of it too. He felt the strength of what had brought him down to earth.

His blue eyes opened, looked at her. The soul had claimed the glory of possession. She caught him in her arms, covered the little body with her kisses. Then in all the fullness of her womanhood she crushed him to her heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MAMMY WAS baking corn bread for supper. It seemed like a dream that Mianda was back. The same sweet Mianda, showing her greatness by the love of the simple life and the things of the past. She had not come alone. Robina and the child were with her.

Mammy had been pitifully lonely after Bengal's Temple was closed and no more she saw his strong, powerful figure in the garden.

"If only I had a baby to love," she kept repeating. "A baby takes away trouble and makes you forget."

Mianda had got her thought on the far away, and now all loneliness was lifted from Mammy's heart. Robina's merry chatter and the cooing of the baby filled the house. When all the news had been told and Mammy and Robina were happy together, Mianda stepped out alone and walked towards the Temple.

Mrs. Thompson was waiting for her with news that she had already heard. Beris was arrested. It was a long, long story, the mother repeated, and tired though she was, Mianda let her relieve her overburdened heart of it all, as they sat on the grass in the wood, close to the very spot where they met years ago.

The eyesight brought back by Bengal led to just what the mother had known. Wild and indifferent, easily persuaded, her boy had left home, plunged recklessly into waste and extravagance, and now was in prison, arrested for murder.

The old mother held Mianda's hand in the moon-

light. She had prayed, with the faith that tramples down obstacles, for her return.

"And he would not hurt an ant in the grass," she was saying. "He was wild over life. The world was all new. He left my side and he didn't know how to live after being shut up in darkness so long."

Mianda put her hands to her head. She was weary with travel and longing for rest.

"The boy is innocent," she said at last. "He was mixed with a rabble of men, and the blame fell on him. The shot came from another man's pistol."

"If we could only find that man," cried Mrs. Thompson.

"We do not mean to find him," said Mianda. "He has already met the higher law."

She put her arms around the trembling little mother and held her for a moment to her heart.

"You remember how Bengal told us that his power would be with us, when we needed him," she said. "Go home now and rest. We shall find the lawyer that we want, and Beris shall be free."

"I know he will now you are here," replied the mother. "Was it not you who led me to the healer? And again God told me He would use you for the expression of His power."

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Mianda entered the Temple alone. A sweet sense of rest fell softly around her. The pearly white moonlight shone through the window. On the soft, warm air came the breath of sleeping flowers. The sweet essence of dreaming grasses.

She lay down beneath the picture, now shrouded in moonlight. The picture each person created by thought. A figure shone out on the canvas. It was

majestic, in force, strength and protection. The hands formed an awning over her head, and resting under their strength, she slept.

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Mianda went hand in hand with Mrs. Thompson to the lawyer. The power set in motion had worked strongly. The guidance now was sure.

"He is the soul we need," the Mother said. "He came to me in dreams just like you came, and God will raise him up to save my child."

Hamlin Jervell was seated at the table when they entered his office. To the ordinary observer, there was nothing very remarkable about his appearance. The first thing that Mianda noticed, was his hand, which was long, white, and psychic. It was not the hand, however, that impressed her, it was the ring upon it. A modern ring which might be worn by any ordinary man, yet in the design and sparkle, a sudden familiarity impressed her, as if at one time she had worn a ring like that herself.

"I have brought the girl," said Mrs. Thompson, by way of introduction. "She is going to help to win the case."

Hamlin Jervell raised his eyes and looked at her. No criminal at the bar had ever been able to meet fearlessly those peculiarly brilliant eyes, which seemed to read into the very soul.

For a moment Mianda stood as if hypnotized by straight and steadfast gaze. She put her hand vaguely to her head. "Where had she seen this man before?"

Memory was groping on lame wings in a great darkness.

He smiled slightly at her confusion, but was

vaguely sensitive himself to something that was unusual.

"Are you acquainted with law?" he asked.

"Not from a material sense," she answered, "but is not the Spiritual force stronger to prove innocence than the material?"

"Oh, the eloquence and conviction of a good lawyer will win the case at all odds, I believe," he answered. "Whether he has justice on his side or not."

"You have proved that," said Mianda, "because your power all lies in inspiration. Being highly sensitive and psychic, you quickly get in touch with the forces waiting in the unseen to free the prisoner, and even if you should prepare a speech, you get away from it as naturally as an inspired musician will leave the notes upon the book, and become the open receptacle to the music of the spheres."

He listened, hardly following her meaning. Being a man, he did not at all object to this adornment of his character by a young and pretty woman, but he turned her seeming compliments aside by saying:

"A clever lawyer can become inspired whether he believes his client guilty or not, and such an one will win, if every star should fight against him. He can, I often think, hypnotize himself, into believing guilt is innocence."

"I have known myself," he continued, "on my most successful cases to be so charged with power, that my words could not come fast enough. The silence in the court would be intense, and when one gains the strength of that great silence, one can be pretty sure of a golden victory."

"You have many beautitful helpers in the unseen," said Mianda slowly, "but in this case you will have

more, for it has already been tried by the Heavenly court, and proved guiltless, and the lawyer who proved it there, will prove it through you here, if you will trust to him."

Mrs. Thompson was listening eagerly. Her feverish hands were clasped together, her lips were moving in unceasing prayer.

The lawyer looked towards her kindly. "I would hate to lose the case because of her," he said.

"You cannot lose it," cried Mianda strongly.

He laughed at her intensity.

"It's good to feel your faith in me," he said.

"Oh, not in you alone," she answered, "it is the power around you. That Mother's prayer has drawn to you a thousand helpers waiting to finish work that they had left undone. Souls which went out dissatisfied, and being still earth-bound, cry to give expression. Right, in God's name, they are now saying. And through their aid you will step on to victory. This case will be the dawn of your new birth."

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When the lawyer found himself alone he sat thinking. He mentally went over all that had been said. He thought of the old Mother's vision, in which he had unconsciously appeared.

He laughed at the idea while he analyzed. "Hamlin Jervall, you've got to watch out," he said, "and not go spooking into other people's houses, when you're supposed to be in bed."

The thought of unseen helpers bothered him, though in a way he had been vaguely conscious of them many times. His mind went back to the hour before the father whom he loved, passed away. He remembered how he had held that strong hand to the

last, and it seemed as if again he heard that clarion voice, which had won the hearts of many an audience, repeating the last words he uttered on the earth plane.

"If there is such a thing as a return of souls, I will come back to you my boy, and help to push you up the ladder, to the place where you belong."

He had not believed that it was possible; yet, many a time in his worst cases he had felt a strength beside him, a cadence in the voice, that was not his own. Gestures which were peculiar to his father, and then it seemed that there was not so wide a distance, after all. "Well, I hope I'll win," he said, "not so much for the fight this time, as for the mother, and the girl."

The picture of the two arose before him. The vision of those earnest eyes, came with a peculiar sense of memory, mixed and crossed out by lives of darkness.

"Where have I seen that face before?" he asked. "It seems as if I taught her this, and now she's teaching me."

Then suddenly he laughed aloud. "Hamlin Jervall, what's the matter with you?" he cried. "Are you losing your reason?"

And crushing back what might have manifested, he lighted his cigar and left the office.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TRIAL was over. Hamlin Jervall came from the court amidst the ringing cheers of the crowd. On every side the people reached to grasp his hand.

Mothers with tears streaming down their faces came up with their blessing. The old judge laid a kindly hand upon his shoulder.

"That was a fine speech, boy," he said. "When you can touch the hearts as well as the heads of the people, you've won the day. It did me good to see the women cry. I'll tell you, I was pretty near the waterworks myself. Those words on the Mother were famous. You'll be in print in big letters to-morrow."

"Well, any way I'm glad I won the case," laughed Jervall. "Glad for the Mother and the girl."

"Who is the girl?" questioned the judge. "Her face is very strong and wonderful."

It seemed strange to Jervall that he could not now recall her name.

But the judge was not waiting to hear it. They had stepped into the auto, and soon were going swiftly along the road.

"How proud your father would have been to hear you," he went on. "I never saw you look more like him than you did today. His eloquence, his actions! I don't blame that pretty girl, for being attracted. She never took her eyes off you. Not for one moment."

"I felt she did not," he unconsciously replied.

"The boy was very grateful, too," the judge continued. "He was innocent enough of the crime, but

his face shows he has sown his wild oats freely. It's maybe just as well he got this hold-up. You touched his heart, I'll tell you when you spoke about his Mother."

Jervall was silent. He wished he could recall what he had said. Dinner with his old friend seemed dull to him tonight. The fame that he had craved brought him no joy. There was an unsettled and a restless feeling in his heart. He was glad the judge had an appointment so that he was free to leave at will.

Mianda's power still lived with him. He would not have given her the glory of his speech, but inwardly he knew her presence had inspired him.

He walked towards Mrs. Thompson's cottage. The mother and the son sat in the garden, bathed in that glow of happiness, which only those who have been parted in suspense can know.

He received their love and thanks, with the patience born of a lawyer. Then, while he smoked, asked casually about Mianda.

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Mianda had gone to the Temple. He found her out of doors, walking amidst the weeds and flowers.

"Bengal would not interfere with Nature," she smilingly explained. "He said that all things had their use. He even liked the weeds to grow up with the flowers."

Jervall stood looking on the gorgeous blend of color. "You paint I suppose?" he asked, glancing at her artistic hands.

"No," she replied decidedly. "I drink the colors right into my soul, for healing. The world is full of those who feel they must express on canvas. They look upon a shining sea, reflecting the blue robes of

Heaven. They gaze on the blaze of the setting sun, inflaming to life and passion, the most silent stream. They carry to the canvas the shivering gloom of a starless night. Borne aloft on the wings of the sunrise, their hands stretch forth to tear the golden glory down to earth.

"It is the mad desire for creation that lives in every human being, express it on what plane they may."

"Yes," he replied reflectively. "We love to see a portion of ourselves immortalized. The writer and the artist can give birth to substance, but the speaker and the singer—"

She was smiling at his words.

"The greatest Master who came to this plane wrote nothing," she replied. "He was content to live."

Hamlin was silent for a moment.

"Strange, is it not," he said at last, "how we desire fame in the golden basket. Now you for instance, you, who are so gifted, you must have some ambition for your life. You want to leave expression of your power in the world."

"We could not live unless we left expression," she replied. "The Master understood, and so He did not ask for record of His sayings. He knew His influence would glitter in the Heavens without the worldly glory of a name. He was content to live.

"We want to talk; we want to write. The great *I* calls for golden ink, but when we see the Universe as one, the *I* will sink to nothing."

Jervall was thinking deeply of her words.

"You may be right," he said. "To-day has meant a victory for me, yet never did I feel more humble. That speech over which the town is clanging, did not

somehow seem like my own. I might be as you say, an instrument for power."

"So are we all," she answered, "the instrument. Therefore we ought to strive to make our lives and thoughts so lovely, that naturally we would attract the highest powers, and so bring Heaven down to earth."

He looked at her a moment, ponderingly. The sun was setting now. The lights had made a rainbow of her hair: she seemed unconscious of his gaze, and even of his thought. Her pure, clear eyes, were looking far beyond him. There was a something in their depths he could not understand. It brought with it that sense of memory he had been conscious of before. He did not fight it now; he stood and waited.

Who was this girl? Where had he known her? He felt the tears fill his eyes. A sudden longing rose within his heart: it was not for possession—No.

In the free life that he had lived all women seemed alike to him. But in this woman he saw something different. A something shining from the darkness of past ages. He felt the reverence one would feel on holy ground.

Mianda turned towards the Temple. She held out her hand for good-bye.

"We did not finish what we had begun," he said. "I was waiting to know more about your life."

"My life? which one?" she asked. "I've lived so many."

"And always as the non-creator?" he said smiling. "Always content to live and breathe, and do no more?"

Her mind seemed traveling through past ages.

"No," she replied. "I have created ever since the day I ground my colors at the slab, and hewed the figures from the rocks. But now the call is here, for

something higher. This time I have come to give the greatest."

"And what is that?" he asked.

"A child," she said.

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Hamlin walked through the flower scented night. For the first time in his life, he felt he did not understand a woman.

Years of wrong living had made the things of which Mianda spoke, profane to him.

He visioned her as she had stood, pure as a spotless calla lily backgrounded by the golden dusk. Once more he felt her inspirational power, like he had felt it in the court.

He had believed she was a woman of high soul and great ambition; born to hold the attention of crowds, to scale the heights. And yet, he almost felt ashamed, to think her truth had led her to confess that her highest ideal was to have a child.

"Well, at any rate she's original, if nothing else," he said. "Women want autos nowadays, they don't want children."

"Motherhood should be no trial," she had said. "Love cannot bring a burden."

Her words came echoing through his memory.

"The dear Bible women paved the way to happiness for their unborn little ones, by singing songs of joy, and welcome, to the world. Each baby was a precious jewel in their crown of life. The nourishment of their old age."

He smiled again.

"Women would pray for motherhood in those days," he said inwardly, "but now they pray against it, or fear it, so that they bring forth nervous, frightened children. Besides, they think a family costs too much

at this time, but Mianda believes that if faith were there, God would never send a child without provision.

"Well, if all people thought so too, we might still have the jewels shining," and almost unconsciously, he began to hum a few lines of a hymn learnt in the Sunday School, and long forgotten.

"Little children, little children, like stars of the morning
Are the jewels, precious jewels, love's bright crown adorning."

"There's some philosophy in it," he said.

CHAPTER XX.

BERIS WAS sitting in the garden, talking to his mother. He had come home like a prodigal, repentant and submissive as a child. His substance was spent, his karma lived through, his inner eyesight born.

"I think I was blind in more than one way, Mother," he said.

"So are we all," she answered, "and that was why One told us we could not condemn. We are in a hospital for crippled souls, and we only pour ink on our own clothes when we try to pour it on another."

Beris sat silent for a moment. He was mentally recalling the past. He did not dwell on the prison—he saw the court. He saw Mianda, and he saw the girl close beside her. The lawyer's speech seemed nothing.

"Somehow, when she looked at me," he confessed, "I didn't feel I was a sinner, though I have committed many another crime. I felt I was just what I've always wished to be, and I made my mind up then, even if it were behind the bars, I would lead a different life. I would try and be a strength to the dear mother, who stood by me through it all."

"A strength to womanhood and to all women," she replied.

A shade of pain crossed the boy's face. His sensitive mouth quivered.

"I thought the evidence would go against me," he continued, "though I was innocent of the crime for which I was accused. They make so much over the

murder of a body, but the man who murders woman's soul gets off scot free."

His sympathetic eyes turned towards the little home where Mammy's voice was crooning to the baby.

"Does he get off?" asked Mrs. Thompson. "Why should we bother when One said, 'Justice is mine.' "

Robina walked down the road while they were talking. She was saving Mammy's steps by doing all the errands. Her face was happy, smiling as she nodded to them.

"Why did a woman, good as she, have such a sorrow?" Beris asked, for he had heard the story.

"She doesn't look like sorrow now," answered his mother.

"She is very beautiful," he continued. "A different beauty from Mianda's, more human. Mianda's I could never reach. She always seems just like a far off star."

His mother smiled and gently answered "a star that by its light, leads man to God."

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The sight was familiar, when Hamlin Jervall found Mianda waiting by the Temple. She did not seem surprised to see him; her mind had been with his all day.

He began to make apologies for calling. She cut them short, and led him through the open door. For a moment he stood looking on the picture, the first thing to attract the eye on entering.

"It appears different to everyone," she said. "I see in Him a little child, dressed in a simple gown, and carrying flowers. The wisdom of the ages in His face."

"I do not see Him as a child," Hamlin replied. "I see Him like He must have looked, when He said to the

man sick of the palsy: 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' Why do I see Him so?"

"Because the picture bears that message for you. You read it for yourself straight from the canvas. To you it brings the power of resurrection. The man borne down by years of bondage, freed. I have often wondered what was the weight which shut him out of his own power. Crippled, he could not free himself. He moved to find a deeper bondage. The shackles and the chains of years upon his limbs. Knots he had tied with his own hands."

Jervall was silent while she talked. His eyes were riveted upon the picture.

"God, what an awakening!" he said. "The load that he had borne so long, dissolved. Free hands, free limbs. Health, strength and power. The open door to his own house."

Mianda turned from the picture, towards him.

"We have wronged God too long," she said. "The book of sins they said He kept against us, meant vaguely our own life, which we are writing; or the karma we make for ourselves. But when Christ freed the man, He broke the karma, and taught us by the cross, we could cross out. He proved it by His resurrection.

Jervall was looking at her now. An emotion that he could not understand swept over him. He wanted suddenly to weep, he knew not why. He felt he must fall at her feet and say: "Forgive me all my sins."

"If I believed in other lives, before this one," he said, "I would believe that we had met before. Just at that moment, I felt like the man sick of the palsy. I saw the shackles on my hands. I saw the walls which I had built around myself. I felt I had to ask you for

my freedom. Why did I feel like that?"

"Come to the oil pool," said Mianda. "Let us wait in silence there, until the story of our life shall be revealed, we only ask for what belongs to us. The memory of lives forgotten. The reason why we met again."

She took his hand in hers, as if he were a little child, and with the sweet simplicity of children waiting for the expected story, they looked upon the glittering pool. And one by one the pictures came.

A city of dazzling whiteness set like an island in a sea of calla lilies, pure as the driven snow, built itself slowly on the golden surface.

Walls high and powerful arose shining like polished pearl.

Gates fastened strongly by the word "Purity" written in golden bars.

They saw processions moving to and fro, in robes silvery as sun-sprinkled clouds.

"Hush," whispered Mianda softly, as Jervall moved uneasily beside her. "We shall hear the voices if we are receptive."

The pool had changed again.

The skies blazed with the sunset of the tropics. They heard the solemn toll of bells, and Jervall saw himself in priestly robes, pass through the surface of the pool.

Across the grass with gentle footsteps, a girl in a white dress came towards him, and placed her little hand in his. The Holy Father meant to her the one in sympathy with all her weakness, who put his loving hands upon her head when she was weary, who took her to his heart when she was sad. Not that this was so often. Her world was small and full of fancies. A world made up of angels and of flowers. He looked

upon her as a child, a little girl of dolls and fairies, his little girl of purity and love, unspotted as the edelweiss of mountain ledge.

The oil pool changed again. Out of its midst there came another figure, with eyes that looked towards the girl like the eyes of the thief towards the diamond.

Frightened by a sense of something that she did not understand, she rushed towards her shelter for protection. The priest received her like he always did. He wrapped his robe around her, and led her to the Temple. But while he looked at her, the knowledge dawned upon him that she might be a child of fairies and of flowers, but still she was the woman.

"Too sweet and pure a flower for him," he said, "and you belong to me."

And then there shone upon his face the glory of possession.

"Would you go with me, with me anywhere, my child?" he asked.

The look of love and trust upon her face was holy.

"I would leave all I have to follow you," she said.

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They looked now on a cottage, glorified by climbing roses, where pines grew tall to hide it from the road. The priest and girl were gazing on the sunset. The childish arms went round him. The eyes of adoration met his own. "My love for you will last forever."

Her words brought sorrow to his face. He looked upon her tenderly. "Be careful, little girl," he said. "Be very careful of the spoken word. For every statement we have got to prove. Don't place upon yourself a bondage. That very vow may be your curse.

"Wise was the man who said, 'Silence is golden!' "

He drew her towards the cottage as he spoke. A sudden look of fear filled her eyes. A fear which made her shrink and draw away. A consciousness of something that she did not understand. She looked back towards the last smile of the sunset.

One pure, white star had broken in the sky. It shone down on her like the face of a child angel. She flung her arms aloft in welcome, and the cottage door closed.

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All things were silent for a moment. Then the watchers felt rather than saw the soft calm winds of morning blowing through the pines. The sunrise opening wide its wings of glory. All living things responding to the light.

Alone, the priest stood on the doorstep.

"And the little life went out," he said. "The sweet, pure soul refused to see its casement touched. Into the greater realms of purity, she returned. Well, she made her own karma in the words, "I would leave all to follow you."

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The scene changed now to modern days. Mianda, still the girl in white, was wandering round her little home. A simple place, adorned by nature. Her life, as simple as the dwelling. Alone with birds and flowers she lived, the world beyond, vague as a dream.

The oil pool changed. No more alone she stood, but with a stately figure by her side. A sense of memory was awakened. Memory of a forgotten past. "Mianda"—the name seemed echoing through the ages. He called it once again.

"Hamlin," she answered, and their souls were joined.

The days rolled on. The canopy of love grew brighter. The birds, the flowers, the voices in the woods, were all in harmony. They sang the story of a lover's life.

To him it was the glory of a day. A page of poetry in business. A golden rose amidst the frosts of winter.

Marriage! what did she know about marriage? Poor little child of stars and flowers.

The world awaited him; the money mart, and he must go.

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The watchers stood in silence. The darkness of the pool had grown intense.

"Wait," said Mianda gently. "We shall see the light."

A spark shone in the darkness. It floated like a water lily upon the surface of the pool, then broke in colored letters like white light, passing through a prism.

CREATION. The first word ever spoken, the first breath ever breathed from which all came, sublimest attribute of God, given as a gift into man's hand.

The colors melted into distance. The letters changed to forms and pictures. Mianda saw herself appear again surrounded now by the riches of a lovely home, yet giving her life in selfless service, walking as a Sister of Mercy, through the world.

Once more Hamlin appeared. He came with the sweet call of ages "Leave all that thou hast and follow me."

She was prepared to follow, drawn by a force belonging to the past.

Memory came back in waves like sunbeams. Scenes of the Temple and the cottage. Sunsets and

golden roses, always through which looked the waiting soul of the little child.

CREATION. He came as tempter with the highest word, the Word of God upon his lips.

CREATION. What did he know of the glory of its meaning. Possession, that was all he craved.

Through eyes of love, she looked at him with scorn.

"How could we hope to bring perfection to this plane, if our own lives were not perfection?" she asked gently.

"Are we not living healthy lives?" he questioned, "then, living healthy normal lives, we shall create a perfect body for our child."

"Yes," said Mianda gently, "but what of the soul?"

"The soul? What is it?" he asked briefly.

A ball of light drifted between them, like a young moon in a mist. Clear, white and beautiful it shone, unspotted as the driven snow. The message for the future came as strongly through the silence as it came when over Jordan's waters, through unfolding wings, the Holy Spirit spoke.

Hamlin saw himself throw his arms upwards with one great cry for knowledge from the Infinite.

And the light in the oil pool went out.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DAYS that followed were like a dream to Hamlin Jervall. After years of continual work along one line of thought, his screen had been flooded with pictures so bright and unexpected that his eyes were dazzled and his brain bewildered by the change.

Like a golden sunrise, breaking through a misty morning, Mianda had swept across the horizon of his life. Only two weeks ago he had not known of her existence. Now it seemed as if for all time he had known her and that apart from her, life could not be.

Marriage? It seemed sacrilege to suggest it. What had he to offer one who had climbed so high; who knew so much; whose idea of creation almost frightened him? Yet, with his whole heart and soul he craved possession, as the wings of night might crave the purity of dawn.

The memory of the pictures in the oil pool came to him like fragments of a broken dream. He did not attempt to understand them. Yet in those fleeting visions, backgrounds of the past, unseen in the pool, would build themselves in the picture, making the tie stronger, and convincing him against reason that for all time, from the very beginning of things, he had known and loved this woman. Was it presumption then, to tell her so?

Hamlin Jervall was honest. Like he would have faced a prisoner at the bar, he faced himself. He knew

his proposal would be a purely selfish one. But then what man's was not? He had nothing to offer to Mianda, not even the clean background of a spotless life. Things which would have brought the average woman, seemed tinsel show, or straws of the street to one who wore the crown of gold.

Protection? He laughed at the thought of it. She stood alone, it was true. From the world's standpoint, pitifully alone. Yet had twelve legions of angels been visible around her, he could not have felt more certain of her safety under all conditions.

Wealth—surely the gold of the universe was hers. The light of it shone about her everywhere. It expressed in her free open hands and in the costly simple gowns she wore.

Love—what would his love amount to? She held her place in the heavens like a shining sun, all things responding to her light.

Still he hoped on, waiting with almost prayers upon his lips that in some way they might be brought together, that the human side, which craved companionship, would make her send for him, and give him a chance to tell her all.

But the days merged into weeks, and no longer able to endure the aches of loneliness, he set off for the Temple.

Mianda was alone. Robina and Beris had just left. Like two children in a new found happiness, they had come to confess their love for one another. The child had been the binding link. It was the hand of the child that had drawn them together. The other woman's child, but yet their own. The child which would belong to both of them.

Mianda had much to tell about this; to tell of the old mother's happiness, and to tell of Mammy's satis-

faction that she was to make her home with these two when they were married.

Hamlin wondered why she should think that this was interesting to him. It was more convincing than ever how little she had thought, how little she had cared about his absence.

"I have missed you," he said, ignoring the story of others. "I cannot see why I have kept from you like this, when there is so much to be gained by being with you. This peculiar mystic side of your nature I don't understand and I am honest with you when I say it. I don't come to win your love with flattering lies on my lips. But even while not understanding that side of your nature, I love it. It brings me closer to something I've always subconsciously wanted. Something without which we miss half life's beauties.

"If I say I love you, as I have never loved before, those same words have been repeated so many times by man, that woman is growing weary of their repetition: so instead of that, let me tell you this love makes me look back and frown on many pages of my life—a man's life, a natural life, as I believed, but a life which beside the beauty of your own, looks sullied, tarnished and discolored. Yet, if the pictures in the pool of oil told us correctly, you loved me through all time, and surely such a love for one so utterly unworthy, must teach me how to understand the selfless love, which is the greatest and the only love."

He paused a moment, then gaining courage from her silence, he continued.

"Will you not marry me? I may be a fool to ask you, but I cannot believe we came together just to part."

"We could not part" she answered simply. "You have been gone two weeks, but yet you have always

been with me, as close and as real to me as you are now."

Her coolness was maddening. He paused for a moment before he dare trust his reply.

"I would give worlds to possess what you do," he said. "The faculty to be separated from one, I believe that you care for, and yet never to miss them."

The loving smile she turned upon him, made him feel thoroughly ashamed of what he had said.

"I had a dream last night," she quietly continued. "I dreamed that I saw you standing before a long dark road. It seemed so endless that you were afraid, afraid not of the dark but of the distance, and for a moment, I felt I must go with you, you looked so sad, you seemed so lonely. Then suddenly I saw the light and I knew that you were not alone. The darkness had deceived us and there was no distance. Come to the upper room with me."

"No," he replied, "I cannot climb the steps. You remember when we went in before, you went up first. You seemed to lift me and I felt ashamed. If I would enter there again, I must learn how to climb. Maybe, that is the meaning of your dream."

There was silence for a moment, then Mianda laid her hand on his. It was warm and tender, vibrating with a woman's understanding love.

"If we should come together now," she said, "before we both can enter in that upper room unaided, unafraid, borne by the white wings of the Holy Spirit, what would be the result? It would be just the same as the pictures in the pool. Each time we came together for one purpose, for divine creation. Each time we missed it through a lack of knowledge of its beauty; this time we will make no flaw. When the time is

ripe, there will be no hesitancy, no delay. I can wait and so can you, and so can our creation."

She spoke as if a third presence were there, lifting her eyes a moment with a smile.

Hamlin listened. The words of Browning rang in his ears. "Much is to learn and much to forget, ere the time be come for taking you."

"If this is the result of sins against you in the past," he said, "surely I have met my punishment a thousand times."

"Why call it punishment?" she asked, "that is too harsh a word. Light only punishes the eyes that are unprepared, but not the eyes of the seeker. When you have found what I have found, we shall enter the upper room together, and look on glories, greater ten thousand times than any we have dreamed of on the outer steps of the Temple. Why should we be content to walk on the ground when we have been promised the wings to soar?"

He could not answer. He could see nothing but the ashes of the roses he had hoped to grasp.

"Will you be satisfied to wait for that fulfillment?" she continued. "By never swerving from one ideal I have proved that love is divine and forever. You have yet to prove it. You have yet to understand the holy ground of creation, before we must dare to put a life upon this plane!"

"If you would only be my teacher" he began.

She interrupted him with her smile and answered: "You must learn apart from me. The way is not so long as you imagined. Your soul is crying for the light."

"And while I find it some other man may win your love."

"And if he did I never belonged to you," she answered, "but that I do, you have been shown, and the love which can wait for fulfillment through so many incarnations can still continue to wait."

She looked at him intently while she spoke, then coming nearer, took his hand within her own, and as she did so, the long bleak road that he had dreaded faded and dissolved.

"What do you see?" she asked.

"The upper room," he answered, "The new Jerusalem. I can see us entering together. Strong golden wings of life and love. Oh, it was worth the waiting."

They stood silent again. The darkness was deepening. The first stars looked from the sky. The moon arose like a bright guardian angel over the Temple. The holy stillness was unbroken by a sound.

"We will not say good-bye," she said, "there is no parting to a love like ours."

"Nor sacrifice," he answered. "For the first time I can understand the Christ."

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